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Library of St. Francis de Sales

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I

The Mystical Explanation of the Canticle of Canticles: By St. Francis de Sales

II

The Depositions of St. Jane Frances de Chantal in the Cause of the Canonisation of St. Francis de Sales

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THE MYSTICAL EXPLANATION OF THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

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I

The Mystical Explanation of the Canticle of Canticles

Composed by Blessed Francis de Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva Founder of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary

Translated from the French by
HENRY BENEDICT, CANON MACKEY, D.D., O.S.B.

With a Foreword by his Grace
THE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

The Sisters of the Visitation, Harrow-on-the-Hill, desire to express their best thanks to the Right Reverend Abbot and Community of Douai Abbey, Woolhampton, for the permission kindly given to make use of the late Canon Mackey's translation of St. Francis de Sales' "Mystical Explanation of the Canticle of Canticles."

FOREWORD

BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER

In a letter written some fifteen years after the death of St. Francis de Sales, St. Jane Frances de Chantal tells us how, in looking over the long-forgotten contents of an old disused box, many writings of the Saint were found, and among them an explanation of the Canticle of Canticles set out in the form of a meditation. She adds that she had never heard the Holy Founder speak of this treatise, but that the then Superioress of the Community declared that he had often preached on the subject to which it referred, in the early days of the Visitation.

We are thus led to see how at an early period the thoughts which ultimately found expression in the great treatise on the Love of God were already taking shape in the Saint's mind; and how, in the midst of many labours demanding the full exercise of that practical sense, which was so distinctive a quality of his character, he was living habitually in a higher region of very close union with God. The insight which a perusal of the "Mystical Explanation" gives us into the history of his spiritual development, is at the same time an incentive to all those who

have to pass a life of activity in God's service, to devote themselves without ceasing to loving thought of Divine things; to maintain themselves in the midst of their labour closely united to God; and to cultivate the interior spirit no less, but far more, than the manifestations of external zeal. It is a lesson that we all need at the present day, in the hurry and pressure of so many urgent duties.

The second part of the volume before us gives us the detailed and finished portrait of the Saint's life, told, in her own simple and transparently truthful words, by her whom God had chosen to be the principal instrument in that which was probably the most enduring work entrusted to St. Francis de Sales, namely, the foundation of the Religious Institute of the Visitation. Almost day by day we are carried in the footsteps of the Saint through every period of his life. We see him as he appeared to the eyes of St. Jane Frances, not in any fancy portraiture such as distance conveys to later biographers, but as he was in the sight of those who lived in close intimacy with him. It is a picture full of consolation and encouragement, destined by Divine Providence to make us understand and love the Saint more than any other account of his life could do, and thereby to draw us to greater thankfulness to God for having given us an example so sweet to contemplate, and so deserving of our imitation.

This new volume of the Library of St. Francis

de Sales will bring consolation to many souls, not only on account of the valuable teaching it contains, but because it is a proof that the special work which God raised up the late F. Benedict Mackey to undertake, and to which he gave so much care and devotion, has not ceased with his death. To F. Benedict the Church is indebted for a fuller and more complete knowledge of the life and writings of St. Francis. May that gentle Saint reward him now for all his labours.

✠ FRANCIS,
Archbishop of Westminster.

Feast of St. John before the
Latin Gate, 1908.

NOTICE

THE PUBLISHER TO THE READER, 1643

My dear Reader,—I know well that to ensure your esteem for this little work which I present to you, it is sufficient for you to know that its author is the Blessed Francis of Sales: such a holy, saintly, and enlightened mind could not speak on such a subject but what was holy and worth hearing.

I do not think I am going against his wishes in publishing it, for although for a long time he kept it to himself, as it was one of the first attempts of his pen, it is nevertheless quite conceivable that, if death had not prevented the plan he had formed of giving more of his writings to the public, not less useful than those now circulating everywhere with such high approbation and good results, his incomparable charity would have induced him to give it to you himself, but no doubt in a more perfect and elaborate form. However, here it is, exactly as it left his hands, and as it was found after his death. The persons with whom he left it, either kept it for their own consolation, or, for some other good reason, did not think fit to publish it sooner. The Latin

text has been added in the margin to make it more clear by comparing one with another.* Souls that are advanced and experienced in the interior life will find, as I hope, satisfaction from it. But I beg you, dear reader, if you desire to profit by it, to read it with as reverent a mind as the holiness of the subject demands.

* This has not been done by Canon Mackey in the translation.

PREFACE

THERE are two sorts of unions of the soul with God in this world: the first by grace, which is made in Baptism, or by means of Penance; the second by devotion, and this is made by means of spiritual exercises. The one makes us innocent and the other spiritual. Solomon, considering himself to have given sufficient instruction on the first sort of union in his other books, only teaches the second in the Canticles, in which he supposes the spouse, that is, the devout soul, to be already married to her Divine Beloved, and represents their holy and chaste married loves, practised by mental prayer, which is simply the consideration of God and Divine things.

Under this name of consideration are comprised four different acts of the understanding; viz. thought, study, meditation, and contemplation.* We think of things without aim or intention, we study them to become more learned, we meditate on them in order to love them, and we contemplate them to enjoy them. Some will look at a portrait simply in order to see the colours and lines, without other aim; others in order to learn and imitate the art; others in order to love the person represented, as princes do their spouses,

* See *Treatise on the Love of God*, vi. [*Tr.*].

whom very often they only see in a picture; others because they already love the person represented, and take pleasure in regarding his or her portrait. The first of these acts is without aim, the second profits the understanding, the third and fourth profit the will, the one inflaming it, the other delighting it. These two last form the mystical subject of the Canticles, but between them we may rightly place petition (*la demande*), and then the three correspond to the theological virtues.

Meditation is founded on faith, considering what we believe in order to love it; petition on hope, asking what we hope for in order to obtain it; contemplation on charity, contemplating what we love in order to rejoice in it.

Still, the subject of this book does not take in petition, nor the two affective considerations alone, nor even devotion, which devotion is neither meditation nor contemplation, but their effect: for it is nothing but a general virtue contrary to spiritual slothfulness, making us prompt in the service of God: in such sort that where faith is we are by devotion made more prompt to believe; where hope is we are made more prompt to desire what God promises, and by charity to love what God commands, by temperance to abstain, by fortitude to endure; and so of the rest: devotion adds to the particular promptitudes which habits give, a general and common one, produced by meditation and contemplation, as a pilgrim becomes more heartened by taking food.

Solomon's *end* in this book is devotion, but his *subject* is mental prayer, taking the word for meditation and contemplation, not for thought, nor for study, nor for petition, nor for devotion, nor even for the consolation and pleasure which is had in prayer, and which, not being always had therein, is distinguished from it; yea, it often happens that this pleasure, while absent from the prayer of the good, is found in that of great sinners: but our pilgrim, if in good plight, after having taken his refreshment, whether with or without relish, returns ever with more promptness to his journey.

Now, if mental prayer is distinguished from spiritual pleasure, as the cause from the effect, still more is it distinguished from spiritual joyfulness, which is produced by the multitude of delights. The courtier who has received from his prince many favours, acquires a habit by which he serves him not only with promptness, but with joy: so we ought always to serve God promptly, but we only serve Him with joy when we have many spiritual delights springing from mental prayer. The pilgrim will be more disposed for his journey if he has eaten; but if he has eaten with relish and appetite, he will be not only disposed but at the same time blithe and joyous.

We have also to say that possibility, facility, promptness, and joyfulness in an action are different things. To bring to life again a dead child is not within the ability of the mother;

to cure him when he is extremely ill is a possible thing but not an easy one; to apply the cautery to his wound by order of the doctor is a thing possible and easy to be done, but not with promptness; on the contrary, it is done with reluctance and dread: the washing of his clothes is done easily, possibly, promptly, but not joyously; while to receive him and welcome him into her arms after he is cured is done possibly, easily, promptly, and joyously.

So the sinner has not of himself the possibility of serving God with merit; as soon as he is in grace he has the possibility together with reluctance and difficulty; having persevered, he serves Him easily; after he has become devout, he serves Him promptly; if he is a contemplative, he serves Him joyously; grace giving the possibility, charity the facility, mental prayer the promptness and devotion, the multitude of delights joyousness.

Above all these acts are ecstasy and rapture: for when in prayer, meditating and contemplating, man so attaches himself to the object that he goes out of himself, loses the use of his senses, and remains absorbed and drawn out of himself; this estrangement of the understanding is called rapture on the part of the object which rapts the soul, and on the part of the power which is absorbed and swallowed up is called ecstasy, the furthest effect of mental prayer here below.

In a word, mental prayer is the subject of the Canticles; but it is necessary to know the above-

mentioned things for the proper understanding of the terms, even when they only seem to be literal: though it is very rarely they are literal, and it is very hard to recognise these in the Canticles; whereas, on the contrary, the mystical terms are there in abundance, and in great variety. For example we never find devotion, relish, joyfulness, rapture, ecstasy, and such like things, but at every step, sleep, dreams, inebriation, languishing, fainting, and the like. Even the nature and attributes of God or of the soul are not named therein, but instead of all this, eyes, ears, teeth, lips, necks, garments, gardens, ointments, and a thousand like things; which have caused confusion in the explanations, by reason of the liberty which each commentator has taken to bring these words to his sense; and, which is worse, by reason of the insupportable licence which the same commentator has taken of understanding in one same page the same word in different manners and for different things.

But we have undertaken nothing except in imitation of the best authors, or without apparent agreement between the signifying term and the thing signified: and having once given a signification to a term, we have never changed it afterwards. Kisses will always signify spiritual consolations; embraces, union with God; sweet-tasting meats, spiritual relish; languishings and faintings, happiness and joys; sleeps and inebrieties, raptures and ecstasies. In the spouse,

when exterior power is treated of, the neck will signify strength to execute; when interior power, it will signify the irascible part, and will never change its meaning. In the Beloved, the head will signify charity. The scene of the Canticles, Jerusalem, will ever be the militant Church; the Beloved will always be God, either uncreated or incarnate; the spouse, the soul; the choir of women, worldly conversations.

In fine, mental prayer is the mystic subject of the Canticles: but what things would Solomon, or rather the Holy Spirit, say of it? He would show us by how many degrees a soul being in mental prayer can rise to the higher consideration of God, and with what remedies it can strengthen itself against many obstacles: whence this division may be made.

There are five principal obstacles in prayer, five principal remedies, and five degrees of it: but the sixth scene represents a soul which having overcome all the obstacles has no longer need of remedies; and to each of the five other scenes is given or laid down an obstacle, a remedy, and a degree.

In the first, the remembrance of past pleasures of the senses is the obstacle, the remedy is the desire of spiritual things, and the asking them from God. The first degree is to consider God in corporeal things.

In the second, the obstacle is the distraction of the imaginative part by phantasies and sensible appearances; the remedy is attention to inspira-

tions; the degree, the considering God in spiritual things.

In the third, the obstacle is human praises; the remedy is to relish Divine; the degree is the consideration which the soul makes of God in itself.

In the fourth, the obstacle is the fatigue of the body and the sensible part; the remedy is spiritual conferences and conversations; the degree is to meditate on God, not in Himself, but in His humanity.

In the fifth, the obstacle is human respects; the remedy is solitude; the degree, the consideration of God in Himself and as God.

THE CANTICLE OF CANTICLES

AN ECLOGUE OF SOLOMON'S MYSTICALLY EXPLAINED

ARGUMENT

This book treats of the way to arrive at a perfect form of mental prayer; it points out the obstacles thereto, the remedies for these obstacles, and by how many degrees we can arrive thereat. The scene is Jerusalem, the militant Church.

DISCOURSE I

FIRST HINDRANCE: THE REMEMBRANCE OF SENSIBLE PLEASURES

He who purposes never more to offend God meets with many occasions of sin presented by the devil. He who resolves to desire no other consolation save in God, meets with the world, which offers to him new temporal pleasures: and it is a great hindrance to receiving the divine consolations to be unable to quit and give up former society, conversations, and recreations.

Therefore the spouse, that is, the soul already in grace, wishing to enter upon the spiritual life

in the kisses of her divine Beloved, which are spiritual consolations, has great difficulty in detaching herself from the company of her companions, old conversations which offer her wine and perfumes, that is, temporal pleasures: wherefore the soul languishing on account of the absence of her Beloved, and desiring to be united to Him by prayer, her companions seek to cheer her with wines and perfumes, bringing to her memory pleasures passed, in spite of which she begs:

> Let him kiss me with the kiss of his mouth.

REMEDY FOR THE FIRST OBSTACLE: THE SOUL DESIRES AND DEMANDS SPIRITUAL GOODS

1st. She considers that earthly goods and pleasures by the side of divine are nothing but vanity. 2nd. That God is sweet and desirable in Himself. 3rd. That many holy souls have led the way, having found no pleasure save in God. 4th. She begs God to take from her all earthly affections.

And as to the first she says:

> For thy breasts are better than wine, smelling sweet of the best ointments.

As to the second she says:

> Thy name is as oil poured out.

As to the third:

> Therefore young maidens have loved thee.

And as to the fourth:

> Draw me; we will run after thee to the odour of thy ointments.

And then immediately, moved with a great confidence of obtaining what she asks, as if it were already gained she adds:

> The King hath brought me into his store rooms; we will be glad and rejoice in thee, remembering thy breasts more than wine: the righteous have loved thee.

But scruples arise, from the memory of past sins; whence she says:

> I am black (but the integrity of her present conscience makes her add) but I am beautiful, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon.

The presence of the elements of sin in concupiscence is a species of disgrace, and yet they cannot be made a reproach to her or imputed to her as sin:

> Do not consider me that I am brown,

Because my sun has willed to leave me in this state of strife:

> Because the sun hath altered my colour.

And this has not happened through my fault, but through that of the first children of human nature my mother:

> The sons of my mother have fought against me.

It was by their sins that I was laid under the

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necessity of keeping such careful guard over myself, as if I had to keep a vineyard:

> They have made me the keeper in the vineyards,

against the attacks of concupiscence: and all this, alas! not by my own actual fault, but by that of another, whence I can say:

> It is not my vineyard that I have kept.

Yet still let confidence return to me, and let me begin to seek my Beloved, where He is more easily found, by prayer:

> Show me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou liest in the mid-day, lest I begin to wander after the flocks of thy companions:

that is, after creatures. Teach me where I may find Thee in prayer with Thy lights and consolations, not staying at the creature.

FIRST DEGREE OF PRAYER: CONSIDERATION OF GOD IN CORPOREAL THINGS

Dost thou now see this sun, O my spouse, these stars, this sky, this earth, these rocks? they are so many ways and roads to find Me; they did not make themselves; they are not without some principle which made them, and which is their last end, which preserves them, which guards them. And who is this principle and this end? It is God: the mothers of all things are the ideas which are in Me, in My

power and goodness. The lambs, as soon as the gate of the sheepfold is open, run straight to their mothers; so man, seeing creatures, ascends little by little to God; it is a means of finding Me:

> If thou know not thyself, O fairest among women (because thou art as yet a beginner), go forth (from the remembrance of past pleasures) and follow after the steps of the flocks.

Seek My path in all creatures; let thyself be guided and led whither they of themselves return, and thou shalt find that they will go and repose in the pastures of their first shepherd:

> And feed thy kids beside the tents of the shepherds.

Thou shalt be conducted to three feeders and one shepherd, to three creating ones and one creator. All sensible creatures will lead thee thither, and the most noble the best. Above all will human nature be profitable to thee in this way in thy first meditations. Thou shalt see the supernatural goods which are therein, as that it is the habitation of God, His throne, and, as it were, His chariot, whence it can say to Him:

> To my company of horsemen, in Pharao's chariots, have I likened thee, O my love.

Thou shalt see in it natural goods; for it is as beautiful in itself as if it had all the ornaments in the world:

> Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtle dove's, thy neck as jewels.

Thou shalt see accidental goods, such as this,

that all the world has been made for thy use, ornament, and service:

> We will make thee chains of gold inlaid with silver.

Which are benefits so great that the soul in meditating upon them is inflamed with love, and is constrained to cry out: As I can do no more, at least I will love Thee, O my love! and will myself be Thy royal chamber, which I will perfume with spikenard; that is, I will fill myself with love:

> While my King was at his repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof.

And further, I will unite myself so closely with Him, that I shall carry Him as a nosegay within my bosom:

> A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me, he shall abide between my breasts.

He shall ever be my dear balm, and my greatest treasure:

> A cluster of Cyprus * is my love to me in the vineyards of Engaddi.

These affections make the Beloved love and praise the soul, saying:

> Behold thou art fair, O my love, behold thou art fair, thy eyes are as those of doves.

As for the soul, which acknowledges that all its light depends on its sun, which is God, it confesses that He alone is good by essence:

> Behold thou art fair, my beloved, and

* *i.e.* of Cyprian grapes [*Tr.*].

comely; (and thou so embellishest our essence when thou wilt, that even) our bed (which is our body) is flourishing.

Behold our bed flourishing, and even this world our habitation.

The beams of our houses are of cedar, our rafters of cypress trees.

Therefore, what wonder is it if:

I am the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys.

The Beloved, acknowledging this, declares that many souls are of a very different quality, by the malice of their wills; for they are like thorns:

As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

Beloved praises, which the soul neither accepts nor rejects, but, captivated with her Beloved, she returns to consider Him amid the same sensible things, not now meditating on Him to love Him, but contemplating Him to delight in Him, praising Him to the highest amid all created things:

As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons.

Wherefore having found a good so eminent above every other, she rests in it, seeking no more:

I sat down under his shadow whom I desired:

And in this spiritual repose is tasted the sweetness of devotion:

And his fruit was sweet to my palate.

So sweet that it produces certain holy distractions and madnesses in my soul, as if it was inebriated with love; whence it cries out:

> He brought me into the cellar of wine, he spread the standard of his charity over me.*

But particularly by the frequent communication of them, they produce the habit of spiritual joyfulness, in which sweetly languishing she feels herself faint away and fall; wherefore she says:

> Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples: because I languish with love.

What further? The soul, feeling the rapture, mystically signified by sleep, coming over it, and not wishing to sleep anywhere but in the arms of her Beloved, says:

> His left hand is under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me.

Then God takes care that low things do not hinder this divine consolation, wherefore He says to the choir of women:

> I adjure you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake till she please.

Then the soul begins to prove and know that there is no sweetness equal to that which is found in mental prayer.

* According to the Hebrew [*Tr.*].

DISCOURSE II

SECOND HINDRANCE; THE DISTRACTION OF THE IMAGINATION

THE better known a road is to us, the more we frequent it; the more people we know therein, the more willingly also we journey thereby and the more easily: but still by such roads we are more slow in arriving at our journey's end, because, having many acquaintance, here we speak to one, there to another, here we enter into somebody's shop, there we stay to talk with a friend. For the consideration of God no track is more beaten, known, or familiar than that of corporeal things, amid which we live; no way is more easy in itself, but also no way has more distractions. When I meditate on God in the angel, who is an invisible thing, and one in no way familiar to me, it produces in me but few fancies and distractions: but if I consider God in man, my imagination descends from the universal to the particular, and under the name of man represents to me Peter, Paul, or somebody doing with me this or that thing. Hence while in this way which is so familiar to us we stop at all the shops of our acquaintance, we arrive at our journey's end either late or never.

In the same way as the multitude of dreams does not allow us to sleep peacefully, but keeps us almost awake while sleeping; so prayer, when

it has arrived at the sleep of ecstasy, which is as it were its summit, may be itself called sleep; but when it is interrupted by distractions of the fancy, it is a sleep full of dreams; and then our Beloved speaks to us and comes to us, not to abide and repose with us; but He comes by leaps and starts:

> The voice of my beloved, behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.

He seems sometimes to approach, sometimes to flee:

> My beloved is like a roe or a young hart.

Now He shows Himself, now He hides Himself:

> Behold he standeth behind our wall.

And though He seemeth to make Himself seen:

> Looking through the windows.

Yet as our sight of Him is neither very clear nor very unbroken, it may be said that the windows have bars, and that He is:

> Looking through the lattices.

REMEDY FOR THE SECOND IMPEDIMENT: ATTENTION TO INSPIRATIONS

Now we must not be beyond measure distressed in these distractions; for they are attached to our nature, and we cannot be blamed for them unless they happen through our fault. Still we must use remedies, which are to often recollect

ourselves, and to incline our ear to hear inspirations:

> Behold my beloved speaketh to me: Arise, make haste, my love, my dove, my beautiful one, and come.

And further, He makes her remember the innocence at which she may piously believe she has arrived, not feeling herself burdened with any mortal sin. O how sad was the winter of sin:

> For winter is now past, the rain is over and gone.

He rejoices that the flowers of devotion begin to spring and grow:

> The flowers have appeared in our land,

That she has begun to cut off evil superfluities:

> The time of pruning is come:

That, as a turtle-dove she makes her plaining and her soft murmuring in her prayer:

> The voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

But further He rejoices that she has already produced flowers of good works and perfumes of good example:

> The fig-tree hath put forth her green figs: the vines in flower yield their sweet smell.

He exhorts her besides this still to go forward: and of a beginner to become a proficient, saying to her:

> Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come.

And because in the beginnings it seems to the soul, that she is amid many difficulties, as amid rocks and thorns:

> My dove in the clifts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall.

Therefore He assures her that still she ceases not to be very agreeable to Him:

> Shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears: for thy voice is sweet and thy face comely.

This discourse is so sweet that it should drive away all other thoughts: yet if these thoughts return, she will say, as it were in a dream:

> Catch us the little foxes that destroy the vines: for our vineyard hath flourished.

And re-uniting herself with her object, she will say:

> My beloved to me and I to him, who feedeth among the lilies, as long as the day * lasts and till the shadows fall. Return: be like, my beloved, to a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

And thus will she surmount this second impediment.

SECOND DEGREE: THE SOUL CONSIDERS GOD IN SPIRITUAL THINGS OUTSIDE ITSELF

This way of considerations is less known, but is also less subject to distractions. In the pre-

* The Vulgate has *donec*. Our English version translates *till*. S. Francis takes in the first place its meaning of *as long as*, and in the second the meaning of *till*.

ceding degree it seems as if one finds not God, although one has found Him ; here, however, we at once recognise that we have found Him :

> In my bed (that is, in human bodies which are the beds of souls) by night I sought him whom my soul loveth : I sought him and found him not. I will rise and will go about the city : (of this world).

And running through sometimes earthly sometimes heavenly bodies, I have sought Him, and have not found Him ; at least distractions have been so great that I scarcely seem to myself to have met Him :

> In the streets and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth : I sought him, and I found him not.

My happiness has led me to remember the angels who are, as it were, the sentinels of the world :

> The watchmen who keep the city found me.

And I resolved to try whether I should find in them the consideration of God more settled :

> Have you seen him, whom my soul loveth ?

Immediately above the angelic nature I have found the divine :

> When I had a little passed by them, I found him whom my soul loveth :

And this without sensible distractions, so that it seems that I shall never lose Him :

> I held him, and I will not let him go.

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Till I enter into heavenly glory, the true home of human nature my mother, and into her chamber, that is, the thrones of the angels which are prepared for me: then to this mysterious seeing will succeed a clear vision:

> Till I bring him (or rather, till He bring me) into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me.

Holy consideration of God in spiritual things! —which, as of its nature it does not breed fancies of the imagination, so it will not breed dreams. The consideration which belongs to the first degree is more interrupted, this is more stable and more exalted. Hence it produces all its effects with more excellence, namely, a livelier love and more spiritual joyousness: to which God adding His grace forbids with a more particular solicitude that she should be awakened:

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and the harts of the fields, that you stir not up nor awake the beloved till she please.

DISCOURSE III

THIRD IMPEDIMENT: HUMAN PRAISES

The soul, advancing from step to step in holy prayer, becomes so resplendent that it is impossible she should not be admired, and that even

the world, seeing her in the midst of the desert, solicited by so many sins, walking faithfully, and resembling a column of odoriferous perfume rising towards the sky, should not exclaim:

> Who is she that goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke, of aromatical spices, of myrrh, and frankincense, and of all the powders of the perfumer?

But this applause is a hidden and sweetened poison, which very often causes the most saintly and devout to lose their justice and their devotion.

REMEDY FOR THE THIRD IMPEDIMENT: TO REFER ALL PRAISES TO GOD

Let him whosoever hears his own praises turn towards those of God: let him persuade the praiser not to wish to praise a thing of so little worth; but to draw up the praises of God out of our lowness and littleness. And if he cannot so soon fix his gaze on the Divinity, let him at least praise Jesus Christ, man, our true Solomon, and that principally in three things, His flesh, His cross, His glory, saying: Behold how worthy is His flesh, the bed of His Divinity and of His soul, surrounded by more than sixty valiant soldiers, who defend it against every one who at night could cause it fear:—that flesh which is not inclined to sin like ours, but by the hypostatic

union, and by the empire it holds over the angels, is altogether perfect and impeccable:

> Behold threescore valiant ones of the most valiant of Israel, surrounded the bed of Solomon; all holding swords and most expert in war: every man's sword upon his thigh, because of fears in the night.

As for the Cross, O how holy is it! It is of wood, but of wood of Libanus, that is, incorruptible:

> King Solomon hath made him a litter of the wood of Libanus:

Justice and mercy are the two columns which uphold this cross:

> The pillars thereof he made of silver, the seat of gold,

Forasmuch as all is done to conduct souls to glory:

> The going up of purple:

For He conducts us to glory only by His Blood, and all this for the souls of the Church, of whom it is said:

> The midst he covered with charity for the daughters of Jerusalem.

Whence there follows for this Lord the crown of the glory of His resurrection and ascension, which should carry away the whole world in His praise:

> Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.

THIRD DEGREE: THE SOUL CONSIDERS GOD IN HERSELF

The soul therefore, refusing the praises of herself in those of God, takes care to adorn herself in all her parts to please Him whom she considers to be alone worthy of all praises. Now her mystical parts are the eyes, that is, the intentions which move them; the hair, that is, her affections —love, hatred, desire, and others—which, like the hair, are neither good nor bad except in so far as they are employed in good or in evil; the teeth, that is, the senses, which chew all the meats that are to enter into the stomach of the understanding; the lips and the speech, that is, the thoughts, which like interior words produce inaudible discourses; the cheeks are the two reasonable powers, which are the understanding and the will; the neck the irascible powers, which drive off and repel impediments; the breasts are the two actions of the concupiscible powers, following good, avoiding evil.

All this has to be adorned and embellished, in order that God may love the soul, and may be able to say:

> How beautiful art thou, my love, how beautiful art thou!

The intentions must be simple, pure and interior, so that it may not be possible to say the one looks outward, the other inward, and that they are crooked and look different ways:

> Thy eyes are doves' eyes, besides what is hid within.

The affections should not be scattered, but gathered together and united like a flock under the crook of the sovereign shepherd:

> Thy hair is as flocks of goats, which come from Mount Galaad.

The senses should be kept as it were imprisoned, like the teeth behind the lips, like sheep newly washed, and their twins, that is, the perceptive and the appetitive faculties, must be under control and regulated:

> Thy teeth as flocks of sheep that are shorn, which come up from the washing, all with twins, and there is none barren among them.

The thoughts ought to be so well regulated that all the conceptions may be dyed in the blood of the Saviour, and the words and discourses full of sweetness and profit for our neighbour:

> Thy lips are as a scarlet lace: and thy speech sweet.

The understanding and the will must show that they know what is right, and intend to do it: and, as in a cut pomegranate, all that is there will be displayed, nothing will therein appear ugly and disagreeable; and these two powers will ever be humble and submissive:

> Thy cheeks are as a piece of a pomegranate, besides that which lieth hid within.

The irascible part shall be so valiant against temptations that one will be able to say:

> Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks: a thousand

bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men.

And as to the concupiscible part, it shall have its desire of good and its avoidance of evil so simple that it may be said:

Thy two breasts like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

Lastly, the Beloved, Who, since His ascension has gone to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of incense in heaven, on the right hand of the Father, as He had foretold:

Till the day break and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

Will praise the soul, saying:

Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.

And He will invite her to pass to the militant and triumphant Jerusalem, saying:

Come from Libanus, my spouse, come from Libanus, come:

And will promise the crowns and thrones of which the demons were deprived:

Thou shalt be crowned from the top of Amana, from the top of Sanir and Hermon, from the dens of the lions, from the mountains of the leopards.

All the ornaments are agreeable to God, but especially simplicity and purity of intention, which ought to be so great that all our ends may be reduced to one end, all our intentions to one intention, all our desires to a desire of serving

and loving God, so that there may be no longer but one eye:

> Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart with one of thy eyes, and with one hair of thy neck.

And that there may be no longer but one hair, whence it follows:

> And with one hair of thy neck.

The intention and the desire being well directed, the breasts of concupiscence will be well regulated:

> How beautiful are thy breasts, my sister, my spouse! Thy breasts are more beautiful than wine,

Her example will be of good odour:

> And the sweet smell of thy ointments above all aromatical spices.

Her thoughts and words will be very devout and sweet:

> Thy lips, my spouse, are as a dropping honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue;

Her actions will be of most excellent fragrance:

> And the smell of thy garments as the smell of frankincense.

Let us say thus: the actions which proceed from a soul are interior or exterior. The exterior are done by the command of the interior; and as for the interior, they must be locked up in God, and the world cannot see them; that is why He says:

> My sister, my spouse is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up.

And as for the exterior, they are to be as a lovely paradise:

> Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard. Cyprus with spikenard, spikenard and saffron, sweet cane and cinnamon, with all the trees of Libanus, myrrh and aloes with all the chief perfumes.

In a word, the soul is a fountain of good works, which spring up towards heaven with impetuosity, like to that of the waters which come from Libanus:

> The fountain of gardens: the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus.

But in all this two things are required on the part of God; that He should drive away the north wind of temptations, and send the south wind of His preventing grace, saying:

> Flee,* O north wind, and come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow.

On the part of the soul it is required that she should accept this grace and co-operate, saying:

> Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat of the fruit of his apple-trees.

Thus, after the myrrh of repentance, God will draw the soul by means of holy exercises to the aromatic perfumes of prayer, with the honey, the milk, the wine, of meditation, of love, and of contemplation: but such contemplation that it

* *Surge;* our version has *arise.*

shall produce delights, joys and ecstacies, which shall not only quench thirst, but shall inebriate; and Our Lord will be able to say:

> I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse; I have gathered my myrrh with my aromatical spices: I have eaten the honeycomb with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved.

DISCOURSE IV

FOURTH IMPEDIMENT: BODILY LABOUR

The soul which arrives at the degrees described very often finds itself with a body tired and worn, whence it happens that if God invites her to new considerations and higher degrees she is in perplexity: she would greatly like to go further, but the labour terrifies her; and if the Beloved call her again, she rises to go to prayer, but still with a resistance of the sensible part which deprives her of pleasure, and causes that she can scarcely think that God is with her; and as happens to those who are extremely tired, she falls asleep while watching:

> I sleep, and my heart watcheth:

Then turning herself towards her Beloved Who is knocking at her heart:

> The voice of my beloved knocking.

And excites her to open to Him, and to recommence her prayer:

> Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:

And with a fourth degree of prayer meditate a little on My Passion. Thou wilt find that I have My head full of the heavenly dew of My blood, and My hair steeped in blood from the nocturnal pricking of the thorns:

> For my head is full of dew, and my locks of the drops of the night.

The soul would willingly obey, but her lassitude makes her desire a little repose; which makes her say:

> I have put off my garment, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?

Most sweet Jesus, in spite of this resistance, You cease not still to be instant upon entering, and as with the hand of a stronger inspiration, He seems to desire Himself to take away, without co-operation, the bolt of the sensible part which forms an impediment to Him, and to enter by the keyhole of the heart:

> My beloved put his hand through the keyhole,

At this mighty calling the soul is stirred:

> And my bowels were moved at his touch.

And resolves that she must open to her Beloved and begin meditation anew:

> I arose up to open to my beloved:

But on the other hand, she feels such great

sorrow for not having opened at the first knock, that she overturns the vase of myrrh, that is, she fills herself full of penitence, pouring out her tears over the very bolt, that is, making her sorrow reach as far as to the sensible part:

> My hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers were full of the choicest myrrh.

By means of this sorrow it happens that although the soul, in spite of the corporal and sensible part, opens to her Lord:

> I opened the bolt of my door to my beloved:

Still, on account of this repugnance, she finds so little relish in prayer, that she thinks God is not with her:

> But he had turned aside, and was gone.

Whence, remembering that she had been so earnestly called, and been so slothful, she is broken-hearted and consumed with sorrow:

> My soul melted when he spoke:

She tries to find relish in the first degree of contemplation by means of sensible things; but her trouble does not permit her to find any there:

> I sought him, and found him not: I called, and he did not answer me.

She passes to the second degree of spiritual and angelic things:

> The keepers that go about the city found me:

But when she compares their promptness with

her sluggishness, she remains transpierced with sorrow:

> They struck me: and wounded me:

What is worst, if she enters into the third degree, and considers herself in her relation to God, she excites the same resistance which is displeasing her in herself, and it seems to her that her face is too ugly in comparison with that of the angels, and that they as it were take from her all her lustre:

> The keepers of the walls took away my mantle * from me.

So that wherever she is she finds great difficulties excited by this fourth impediment of corporal labours.

REMEDY FOR THE FOURTH IMPEDIMENT: SPIRITUAL CONFERENCES AND CONVERSATIONS †

Vocal prayer or rather spiritual desires serve as remedies for the tedium of labour. So one sees that he who by illness has lost relish and appetite, changing his meat recovers them, and that in contemplative congregations, spiritual colloquies are intermingled with prayers. The soul then, disgusted by the labour of prayer, should address herself to spiritual persons and beg them to help her to find her Beloved:

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,

* *Pallium;* our version has *veil.*

† In the old French edition of 1643 the title is "Colloques et desirs spirituels" [*Ed.*].

if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love (for Him).

And they, knowing her needs, will draw her on to describe the qualities of the Beloved:

What manner of one is thy beloved of the beloved, O thou most beautiful among women? What manner of one is thy beloved of the beloved, that thou hast so adjured us?

Then she proposes Jesus Christ so exactly according to nature, that it is not possible to represent Him better. He is God, the brightness of the same light, but made man in order to be able to buy us back by the purple of His blood:

My beloved is white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands:

And as man He is so singular that He can be recognised among a thousand:

Chosen out of thousands.

Because charity, the chief of virtues, may be said to be of gold in Him, that is, precious:

His head is as the finest gold;

And the graces and benefits which like innumerable tresses grow from it are the first fruits of palm-trees: and black as ravens: they are the effects of the victory which He gained on the tree of the cross, as worthy of admiration as black is in a horse:

His locks as branches of palm trees black as a raven.

He is like a white dove, which has in itself

all the gifts of the Holy Spirit represented by the eyes:

> His eyes as doves upon brooks of water, which are washed in milk,

The Holy Spirit, called in another sense a river, not by measure but with all plenitude, is given to her:

> And sit beside the plentiful streams.

Wherefore, if you contemplate these examples, like cheeks full of striking beauty in the sight of all, odorous as vases full of aromatic perfumes, they will make themselves smelt on every side:

> His cheeks are as beds of aromatical spices set by the perfumers.

His doctrine seems to be precious myrrh, like lilies from His holy lips:

> His lips are as lilies, dropping choice myrrh.

His miracles are such that from His hands hyacinths seem to flow and fall abundantly.

> His hands are golden rings* full of hyacinths.

In everything, whether interior or exterior, this Beloved is admirable: His heart is of ivory enriched with precious stones, His deliberations are simple but prudent:

> His belly as of ivory, set with sapphires.

His executions are full of strength but having discretion:

> His legs as pillars of marble, that are set upon bases of gold.

* *Fornatiles;* our version has *turned.*

and to finish here, He is all most dear, He is all most lovely:

> His form as of Libanus, excellent as the cedars.

FOURTH DEGREE; CONSIDERATION OF OUR GOD IN HIMSELF BUT AS MAN

Whilst the soul discourses of God in His humanity, sweetness returns to it, and it is forced to cry out: Ah!—

> His throat most sweet, and he is all lovely: such is my beloved, and he is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

And if the persons she is with would persist and say to her:

> Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou most beautiful among women? Whither is thy beloved turned aside, and we will seek him with thee?

She will no longer listen to them: but recognising that although her troubles had made her think that her Beloved had withdrawn far from her, yet still He had not gone, but on the contrary had always stayed with her as in His garden, or as in a cabinet of perfumes;—and drawing from this the greatest occasion of merit, she can say that He has culled from her most sweet smelling lilies:

> My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the bed of aromatical spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

And on this account, since she knows that He has been always with her and is still so at present, she says:

> I to my beloved, and my beloved to me, who feedeth among the lilies.

She has no further need of anything save to converse with Him, saying: O Lord! when shall I please You by my beauty, sweetness, grace, strength, innocence, devotion and discretion? when will You say to me:

> Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem: terrible as an army set in array.

Already, Lord, You have shown me, by a thousand signs that my glances have wounded You, that is, that my intentions are not displeasing to You:

> Turn away thy eyes from me, for they have made me go out of myself.*

That my hair, that is, my desire, is pure and simple:

> Thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from Galaad.

That my senses, as flocks, have been carefully guarded:

> Thy teeth as a flock of sheep, which come up from the washing, all with twins, and there is none barren among them.

And that the powers of my concupiscible part, desiring good and fleeing evil without dissimula-

* *Avolare;* our version has, *made me flee away.*

tion, like two rose-tinctured cheeks are dear and agreeable to you:

> Thy cheeks are as the bark of a pomegranate, besides what is hidden within thee.

But, O God, says the soul, You have already praised me for almost all these parts; I should now desire to make progress, and to surpass in devotion many other souls who are devout or who think they are so, and to make You able to say to me:

> There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and young maidens without number. One is my dove,

What shall I say?—perhaps my desires aspire too high!—but I would desire that You should be able to say to me—"my perfect one"!

> My perfect one is but one.

I would have in my nature, which is my mother, some rarity, and that it should be said of me:

> She is the only one of her mother, the chosen of her that bore her.

And further, I would have one able to say:

> The daughters saw her, and declared her most blessed: the queens and concubines, and they praised her.

For her innocence while her origin is in the night of sin:

> Who is she that cometh forth (in devotion) like the morning rising, fair as the moon (with prudence and good election), bright as the sun, (and finally in her in-

vincible force) terrible as an army set in array?

But besides this the soul adds: Where have You been, my Lord? It seemed to me that You had left me, when trouble and fatigue permitted me to feel no satisfaction. I have been, says He, in thee who art My garden, and I have been there with more profit to thee than I should have been if from the beginning I had given thee sweetness, furnishing thee an occasion of merit, whence I have drawn from My garden a greater fruit of merit:

> I went down into the garden of nuts, to see the fruits of the valleys, and to look if the vineyard had flourished, and the pomegranates budded.

Blessed then be You, O Lord, answers the soul, because in this way making me believe You were absent, You have given me an occasion of merit, and have made me make more way in a short time than by the coaches of princes: and because I knew not that You were with me, I can say:

> I knew not: my soul troubled me for the chariots of Aminadab.

DISCOURSE V

FIFTH HINDRANCE: HUMAN RESPECT

When a person attains some rare and unusual manner of life, not only does every one praise

him, but it seems that every one desires to see him, and cries after the soul:

> Return, return, O Sulamitess: return, return that we may behold thee.

And it is not enough that the spiritual person depreciates what is in herself:

> What shalt thou see in the Sulamitess but the companies of camps?

For in spite of this, those who see her praise her for her feet and way of walking, that is, for the obedience with which they see that this soul keeps the commandments of God:

> How beautiful are thy steps in shoes, O prince's daughter!

For her spiritual chastity, which makes one acknowledge that God is co-operating with her:

> The joints of thy thighs are like jewels that are made by the hand of a skilful workman.

For a rich poverty which never has need of anything:

> Thy navel is like a round bowl never wanting cups.

For fastings, which, filling the belly with peace, only crown the soul with fair and rich lilies:

> Thy belly is like a heap of wheat, set about with lilies.

For the study of the two Testaments:

> Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.

For fortitude:

> Thy neck as a tower of ivory.

For prudence:

> Thy eyes like the fish-ponds in Hesebon, which are in the gate of the daughter of the multitude.

For precise justice:

> Thy nose is as the tower of Libanus, that looketh towards Damascus.

For the mastering of the affections; and for conformity with the will of God which is known by the channels of revelation:

> Thy head is like Carmel: and the hairs of thy head as royal purple not yet taken out of the dye.*

In short, this soul is the subject of all tongues, which say to her, praising:

> How beautiful art thou, and how comely, my dearest, in delights!

And she, increasing evermore in charity, and bearing fruit amidst her neighbours, is like the palm and the vine:

> Thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

They who are in any necessity, whether of spirit or of body, say:

> I said: I will go up into the palm tree, and will take hold of the fruit thereof: and thy breasts shall be as the clusters of the vine:

And on account of her good example, they say to her:

> And the odour of thy mouth like apples.

* *Purpura regis vincto canalibus:* our version has, *the purple of the king bound in the channels.*

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For her good words—Ah! they say:

> Thy throat like the best wine, worthy for my beloved to drink, and for his lips and his teeth to ruminate.

In a word, all this causes great disquietude to the devout soul.

REMEDY FOR THE FIFTH HINDRANCE: SOLITUDE

Oh! how good it is to retire into solitude! Wherefore the soul can say:

> I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field, let us abide in the villages.

Now the fruits of solitude are four: first, we waken up better to the examination of our conscience:

> Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vineyard flourish, if the flowers be ready to bring forth fruits, if the pomegranates flourish:

Secondly, we then make a more entire resignation of the concupiscible faculty and its desires:

> There I will give thee my breasts.

Thirdly, devotion grows:

> The mandrakes give a smell.

Fourthly, we then offer more humbly to God our little merits, past and present:

> In our gates are all fruits: the new and the old, my beloved, I have kept for thee.

FIFTH DEGREE: THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD IN HIMSELF AND AS GOD

But amongst the fruits of solitude, this is eminent, that one can therein more easily consider God as God; which makes the spouse use those two words, "alone," "without," that is, apart from all creatures:

> Who shall give thee to me for my brother, sucking the breasts of my mother, that I may find thee without (quite alone),

A consideration which makes men holily foolish, makes them dance before the Ark: whence it happens that until the soul has arrived at the affection of contempt of self, it ever has some shame; and this is why it desires solitude:

> And kiss thee, and now no man may despise me?

A consideration which is a pledge of the enjoyment of heaven, whence the soul seems to itself to be there already:

> I will take hold of thee,

I shall see Thee face to face, O God! when we shall be in the true house and in the true chamber of human nature, that is, in heaven:

> And bring thee into my mother's house:

Then I shall see all that belongs to my happiness, as in a mirror:

> There thou shalt teach me,

And when Thou shalt have drawn from me, for my felicity, the wine of the grape and the must of pomegranates — glory essential and accidental:

> And I will give thee a cup of spiced wine and new wine of my pomegranates.

Then shall the sweetness come, then the ecstasies, then the sleep of the powers; so that the sacred Spouse begs for pillows to sleep upon:

> His left hand under my head, and his right hand shall embrace me.

The Beloved for His part tries to secure that she shall not be awakened:

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stir not up, nor awake my love, till she please.

DISCOURSE VI

THE SOUL, HAVING SURMOUNTED ALL IMPEDIMENTS, HAS NO LONGER NEED OF REMEDIES, BUT REMAINS UNITED TO GOD AND ABSORBED IN HIM BY A PERFECT DEVOTION

At last the soul has arrived at so great a perfection of devotion, that no pleasure of the world moves her, no appearance seduces her, no praise weakens her, no labour terrifies her, no human respect restrains her: but in sight of the whole

world she freely displays her love for her Spouse, and dances before the Ark, not troubling herself when the wisdom of the world, after having said to her:

> Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?

Also follows her to rebuke her, because she is:

> Leaning upon her beloved.

On the contrary, she ever talks with her Beloved of the great sign of love He gives in the very place where He had been the most offended, and when He resolved to die for us after Adam and Eve had disobeyed Him:

> Under the apple tree I raised thee up: there thy mother was corrupted, there she was deflowered that bore thee.

The soul will no longer find any difficulty in labours; for nothing is difficult to the love which she holds deeply graven on her heart, and even in exterior actions:

> Put me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm,

So that love combats death:

> Love is strong as death,

Hell cannot daunt it:

> Jealousy as hard as hell,

Flames and fires are frozen in comparison with her love:

> The lamps thereof are fire and flames.

The sea could not extinguish it:

> Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it:

Nothing is comparable to it:

> If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing.

As to the praises which are given her, the soul troubles not herself with them, because she says within herself: What are these imperfect souls, who having no good of their own would deck themselves out with external adornments? My little sisters, that is, imperfect souls, should think of this; for they have no breasts of themselves, no virtues or merits of their own:

> Our sister is little, and hath no breasts. What shall we do to our sister in the day when she is to be spoken to?

In them one can supply the defect with praises, just as if one covered with silver a broken and dilapidated wall, with cedar a door which had rotted:

> If she be a wall, let us build upon it bulwarks of silver: if she be a door, let us join it together with boards of cedar.

But I, happy I, says the soul, concern myself very little with pleasing men, my Beloved having made me as a wall and as a tower of such kind, that I am very pleasing and agreeable:

> I am a wall: and my breasts are as a tower since I am become in his presence as one finding peace.

Then come sensible and temporal things, against

which the soul perfect in mental prayer has taken such a disposition, that considering them as vile and of low price in comparison with her rich object, she only thinks of them in so far as they can modestly serve her necessities. For the rest, no care of herself can turn her aside. Little, says the soul, is necessary to one who seeks to live in the peace of Our Lord and with moderation. A thousand pieces of silver, or some other great price, is a thing of too little value:

> The peaceable had a vineyard, in that which hath poplars: * he let out the same to keepers, every man bringeth for the fruit thereof a thousand pieces of silver.

But I, says the soul, I have no need of so many things:

> My vineyard before me is thy thousand peaceful ones,†

On the contrary I will further give two hundred as alms to these poor, who by their prayers guard for us our goods:

> And two hundred for them that keep the fruit thereof.

And indeed, being abstracted from all sensible things, I would have not one of them able to distract me or to trouble me.

And finally, if we would pass to worldly pleasures — I know, says the soul, that my

* *Populos;* our version has *people.*

† *Vinea mea coram me est mille, tui pacifici.* Our version has, *My vineyard is before me. A thousand are for thee, the peaceable.*

Beloved will not endure rivals, and that with the consolations He gives me, He will not have me mingle the consolations which other than He could give me: and thus He commands me that rising up, and resigning myself totally to Him with a clear and open protestation, I renounce all other lovers:

> Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the friends hearken: make me hear thy voice.

And at once here am I, ready to obey Him. No longer the world or its pleasures, no longer any mortal thing, O God, my God! Thou alone art my Well-Beloved. Thou alone art all my good: it is Thou alone whom I seek:

> Fly * (that is, come, but come lightly) O my beloved, and be like to the roe, and to the young hart upon the mountains of aromatical spices.

In which last protestation and perfect resignation of the soul into and unto God consists the end of mental prayer, and the highest degree of spirituality, which is this close union of the soul with God by devotion.

And, to conclude, there remains no more to do except to pray Our Lord to deign by His mercy to draw us to Him by these degrees of mental prayer, so that being already united with Him in this world by grace, we may be so also by devotion; in order that after our death we

* *Fuge;* our version has, *flee away.*

may be so by glory, and that in all these holy unions *He may kiss* us, this divine Beloved, *with a kiss of His* sacred *mouth.* AMEN.

Translated from Blaise, *Œuvres complètes de Saint François de Sales*, but corrected by the excellent edition at end of the *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, in possession of the Sisters of the Visitation of Harrow-on-the-Hill. (Bookplate, "Lord Arundell of Wardour.") Paris, Sebastian Hure, Père et Fils, Rue S. Jacques au cœur-bon, et à la Visitation, 1647. [*Henry Benedict Mackey.*]

Compared also with the oldest known edition extant, Paris, 1643. Preserved at the First Convent of the Visitation of Rouen, Rue de Joyeuse 24 [*Ed.*].

II

St. Jane Frances de Chantal's Depositions in the Cause of the Beatification and Canonisation of St. Francis de Sales

Translated from the French by

J. S.

Revised and Corrected by

A PRIEST OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

CONTENTS OF THE DEPOSITIONS OF THE VENERABLE MOTHER JANE FRANCES FRÉMYOT DE CHANTAL

FIRST RELIGIOUS, FIRST SUPERIOR, AND FOUNDRESS OF THE ORDER OF THE VISITATION OF HOLY MARY

Taken from pages 191 to 311 of the Process drawn up by Apostolic Authority at Annecy in 1627, by their Lordships Andrew Frémyot, Archbishop of Bourges, John Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley, and the Reverend George Ramus, Protonotary Apostolic, concerning the Cause of the Beatification and Canonisation of Saint Francis de Sales; and collated with another Process drawn up in the same Cause, at the afore-mentioned Annecy in 1658, volume six, page 230 to page 346, line 9.

IN THE NAME OF GOD. AMEN.

In the year 1627, Indiction X, on July 27, at eight o'clock in the morning, it being neither a day of obligation, nor a feast day, but a lawful day, in the fourth year of the Pontificate of Pope Urban VIII, before the Most Illustrious and Right Reverend Andrew Frémyot, Lord Archbishop of Bourges, John Peter Camus, Lord Bishop of Belley, and the Very Reverend George

Ramus, Protonotary Apostolic, all three judges sub-delegated by the Sacred Congregation of Rites to draw up, by apostolic authority, the Process concerning the life and miracles of the servant of God, Francis of Sales, Bishop of Geneva: the aforesaid Judges holding their court in the parlour of the Convent of this town of Annecy, which is the place they have chosen and appointed for receiving the oaths and depositions of the devout Nuns of the said Convent of the Visitation, and at the request of the Very Reverend Father Dom Justus Guérin, of the Order of the Clerks-regular of St. Paul, Provincial of Piedmont, and representative in this Cause of His Highness Victor Amadeus of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont, and of the Venerable Chapter of the Cathedral Church of St. Peter at Geneva, and also of all the Venerable Clergy of the same diocese, and further of the Syndics and Councillors of the town of Annecy, there appeared Jane Frances Frémyot, First Religious of the Order of the Visitation, who, on account of her excellent virtues was the Foundress of ten Convents of the same order. She was presented as a witness before the delegated Judges, and summoned on the fourth of this month, by the Venerable John Favre, one of the officials appointed in this Cause, as is officially proved by the account of the serving of the summons. After due warning, by the delegated Judges, of the gravity of perjury, she was sworn, before the said Judges, laying her hand upon her heart, to tell the truth in this

Cause, both in answer to the preliminary questions and concerning the points to be investigated, and the whole of the present Cause, without being moved by hatred or favouritism or self-seeking or any other human consideration.

She was then examined as follows:

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

Each witness was asked:

1. If he knew the enormity of the sin of perjury.
2. His name, age, profession, country, and the name of his father and mother.
3. If he went to Confession and Communion at Easter and at other times.
4. If he had ever been excommunicated or condemned for crime.
5. If he was actuated by any worldly motive.
6. By whom he had been summoned.

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1. As to whether she was aware of the gravity of the sin of perjury:

She answered:

"I know that perjury is a very great and grievous sin, and I certainly do not wish to commit it."

2. Concerning her name, age, profession, country, and the name of her father and mother.

She answered:

"My name is Jane Frances Frémyot, commonly called de Chantal, native of Dijon, capital of the Duchy of Burgundy. My age is fifty-four: I am the daughter of Messire Benigne Frémyot, Second President of the Parliament of Dijon, and of Dame Marguerite de Berbisi, and I am the first Religious and first Mother Superior of the Order of the Visitation of our Lady, and in that first capacity, daughter of Blessed Francis de Sales, our Founder."

3. As to whether she went to confession and communion at Easter and at other times.

She answered:

"I go to confession twice a week, usually. Our rule bids us communicate every Sunday and Holy day (feast day), and on Thursdays; and by the advice and command of our Blessed Founder, I communicate every day, and have just now come from Communion."

4. As to whether she had ever been excommunicated or condemned for any crime.

She answered:

"I have never undergone any penal sentence, nor have I incurred any excommunication that I am aware."

5. As to whether she was actuated by any human motive.

She answered:

"I am not induced to make this deposition by any personal interest, but only to render testimony to the truth, and to glorify God, Who has shown Himself wonderful in His Saint."

6. As to who had summoned her.

She answered:

"I appear here in consequence of the summons I have received from Monsieur Jean Favre, priest, and show you, my Lords, the copy of the said summons which he served upon me."

LIST OF POINTS INVESTIGATED

1. Particulars concerning the father and mother of the servant of God.
2. His childhood.
3. The charity which from his childhood he showed towards the poor.
4. His behaviour while he was pursuing his studies at Annecy and Paris.
5. The devotion which he from that time forth entertained for the Blessed Virgin.
6. His behaviour during the time of his studies at Padua, and his journey to Loretto and to Rome.
7. His visit to the Bishop of Geneva, Claude de Granier, after his return from Padua.
8. His behaviour after his return from Padua up to the time of his entering the Priesthood.
9. His behaviour as a deacon.
10. The manner in which he fulfilled both his priestly duties and those of Provost.
11, 12. The ravages made by heresy in the Chablais, the servant of God's mission there, and the procession from Thonon to Annemasse.
13. The book of *The Standard of the Cross.*
14. Where he celebrated Holy Mass during the Chablais Mission.
15. How he carried the Blessed Sacrament to the sick during the Chablais Mission.
16. His conferences with the heretics.

17. His desire to convert England and Switzerland.
18. His being chosen by the Bishop of Geneva as his coadjutor.
19. His journey to Rome and what happened there.
20. What occurred on his return from Rome.
21. His behaviour towards the Bishop of Geneva, whose coadjutor he was.
22. His behaviour at the time of Henry IV.'s invasion of Savoy.
23. His consecration, and how he prepared for it.
24. His faith.
25. His hope.
26. His love of God.
27. His love for his neighbour.
28. His practice of the four Cardinal Virtues.
29. His chastity.
30. His humility.
31. His patience.
32. His gentleness.
33. His piety, mental prayer, and recollection of the presence of God.
34. His love of his enemies.
35. His zeal and his many sermons.
36. His works of mercy.
37. His peace of mind and his efforts to settle lawsuits and make peace.
38. His virtue of Religion.
39. His conformity to the Will of God.
40. His discernment of spirits and gift of prophecy.
41. His magnanimity.
42. His assiduity in the confessional.
43. His care for the perfection of Monastic Orders.
44. His zeal for the salvation of souls, and the books he published.

45. His contempt for honours and for worldly goods.
46. His manner of dealing with his neighbour.
47. His conduct in the government of his diocese.
48. The excellent order of his episcopal household.
49. His charity to the poor.
50. The miracles which he worked during his lifetime.
51. His reputation for sanctity.
52. His last illness and death.
53. His funeral and the veneration shown by the people to his mortal remains.
54. The graces obtained by his intercession.
55. The lives of the Saint written by various authors.

POINTS INVESTIGATED

When Saint Chantal came to the points brought forward by Dom Juste Guérin, the Procurator in this Cause, she answered as follows:

FIRST POINT

PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE FATHER AND MOTHER OF THE SERVANT OF GOD

Her answer on the first point was:

With regard to the childhood of this Blessed Prelate, I know nothing except by hearsay, not having become acquainted with him until after he had been consecrated Bishop; but it is a well known fact that he was born in holy wedlock, at the Château de Sales, in the parish of Thorens. It is equally well known that his parents were people of the highest character as well as of a noble and ancient family, that they were most charitable to their neighbours, and very good Catholics; and with regard to the latter point we are assured that not one of them was ever suspected of heresy, although living in

such close proximity to Geneva. Indeed, an excellent remark, made by the father of our Blessed Founder to some people whose report may be trusted, has come to my ears, namely: "that he did not care to embrace a religion, which he had seen spring up into existence, and which was really his junior by twelve years."

It is a fact known to the public that this Blessed Prelate was baptized in the Parish Church of St. Maurice at Thorens, and I believe that his parents had him confirmed at the proper age.

I knew the late Madame Françoise de Sionnaz, the mother of our Blessed Founder, most intimately; and am aware that she is believed to have offered this child to God even before his birth. She was one of the most estimable women of her time known to me; her soul was noble and generous, pure, innocent, and simple. She was the true mother and tender guardian of the poor; modest, humble, and kindly to all, very calm and gentle in her household; ruling her family wisely, and taking care to bring them up in the fear of God; frequently approaching the Divine Sacraments of holy Confession and Communion; and, out of the devotion and reverence which she bore to her blessed son, she became his spiritual daughter. From his own lips and from those of many others I have learned that she died a most sweet and holy death, and that after her decease she was more beautiful

to look upon in her calm serenity, than can be imagined; and all this is true, and well known to the world, as I have related it in detail.

SECOND POINT

HIS CHILDHOOD

Her answer on the second point was:

I assert it to be a well known fact, that our Blessed Father was nourished and brought up by his parents in the most holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith, that he persevered steadfastly therein until death, and that from his childhood, according to what I have heard said by many persons of unquestionable veracity, he displayed a wisdom, gentleness, and kindliness quite extraordinary at that age, being also most docile and obedient to his parents. This is true and well known.

THIRD POINT

THE CHARITY WHICH FROM HIS CHILDHOOD HE SHOWED TOWARDS THE POOR

*To this point there is no reply from Saint Chantal.**

* There are three points, namely, the third, the seventh, and the twenty-second, to which Saint Chantal did not reply, probably because she knew nothing of the matters on which they touched.

FOURTH POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR WHILE HE WAS PURSUING HIS STUDIES AT ANNECY AND PARIS

Her answer on the fourth point was:

I declare that it is well known that he was sent by his parents to the College of Annecy, where he very soon endeared himself to his companions. M. de Sales,* Provost of the Cathedral of Geneva, a man of exemplary life and great learning, told me that the very presence of our Blessed Father was sufficient to keep his fellow-students in order; and that even at that early age he was endowed with that gravity, humility, and propriety of demeanour which never forsook him in his after life; that he bore with the impertinences and ill-humours of the other students sweetly and patiently; that he was so lenient towards their faults that he often took their well-deserved punishments upon himself; and that, when his companions went off in the evening to their various amusements, he would stay at home and invite the person in whose house he boarded to hear him read the Lives of the Saints, saying to her: *Aunt,*† *I have really something good to tell you.*

The Blessed Prelate told me that, from his

* This was Canon Louis de Sales. who succeeded Saint François de Sales in the dignity of Provost.

† This was a playful expression — she was not a relative [*Tr.*].

earliest youth, God had taught him to trust in His heavenly providence. He also told me that, as he grew older, his parents sent him to Paris, under the care of his tutor, M. Déage, a priest of great learning and piety. This M. Déage spoke repeatedly of the great obedience and unfailing respect paid to him by our Blessed Founder, and declared that his modest demeanour so endeared him to all, that they delighted to watch him as he went to and fro through the streets; even the working folk noticing him as different to his companions. M. Déage added that he never caused him the least annoyance by misconduct of any kind, or neglect of his studies; that there was therefore never any need to bestow any chastisement upon him, except perhaps a light box on the ear or repulse, when he had made himself too busy in trying to get one of his fellow-students pardoned; that, on such occasions the saintly youth would go quietly away without a word of complaint; that he never left the house without leave, although he had reached an age when he might have done so; and that, when his tutor refused to grant him this leave, he withdrew to his own apartment without a sign of annoyance.

Our Blessed Founder told me once, in order to console me in some trouble, that when he was a student at Paris, he fell into a state of great temptation and extreme agony of mind. It seemed to him certain that he was reprobate, and that for him there was no hope of salvation—

thoughts which overwhelmed him with anguish, especially when he remembered that the lost cannot possibly love God, or see our Blessed Lady.

Notwithstanding the extremity of this torment, he always, in the depths of his soul, held fast to one resolution, namely, to love and serve God with all his strength throughout his life, and so much the more faithfully and affectionately, because he imagined that he would not be able to do so in eternity. This agony lasted for three weeks at least, perhaps for nearly six, but on that point my memory is uncertain, and with such violence that it deprived him of appetite and sleep, reducing him to such a wasted and pallid condition that his tutor was filled with anxiety.

One day, however, when it pleased Divine Providence to deliver him, our Blessed Founder on his return from the palace,* passing by a church, the name of which I have forgotten,† went in to say his prayers there. Kneeling down before one of Our Lady's altars, he noticed a prayer pasted on to a board, beginning: *Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection,* &c.; he said it all through, then rose from his knees, and at that very instant felt himself perfectly and entirely cured, and it seemed to him that his disease fell at his feet like the scales of a leper. What I have related is true and of public knowledge.

* Collège—see Charles Auguste de Sales' *Vie de S. F. de Sales* [*Ed.*].

† St. Etienne des Grès [*Ed.*].

FIFTH POINT

THE DEVOTION WHICH HE FROM THAT TIME FORTH ENTERTAINED FOR THE BLESSED VIRGIN

Her answer on the fifth point was:

I declare that our Blessed Founder also told me that, while he was still a student, he made a vow to say the rosary every day of his life, in honour of God and of the Blessed Virgin, to obtain deliverance from a grievous temptation which molested him, and from which he was delivered. He always carried it in his belt as a sign that he was the servant of Our Lady, he persevered until death in saying it, and always said it with great devotion, spending an hour in so doing, for he meditated while saying it. And this is true, &c.

SIXTH POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR DURING THE TIME OF HIS STUDIES AT PADUA, AND HIS JOURNEY TO LORETTO AND TO ROME

Her answer on the sixth point was:

I declare that our Blessed Founder told me that he was sent to Padua to complete his studies. It will be seen from the exercises, resolutions, and rules of piety which he prescribed for himself at that time, which I have seen in his own handwriting, and which are inserted in his Life,

written by the Reverend Father, Dom Jean de St. François, General of the Feuillants, how our Blessed Founder was from that time guided and directed by the special grace of God, and also what were the occupations to which he principally directed his attention. He also told me that while he was at Padua he was seriously ill, and suffered from three deadly and very painful diseases at the same time; all this he endured patiently. The before-mentioned M. Déage, his tutor, thinking that he must surely die, had him asked where he desired to be buried; he replied that his body was to be given to the head surgeon for dissection, *in order*, said he, *that if I have been of no use to the world during my life, my body may at least after death be of some service to it, without any of the riots and difficulties attendant upon body-snatching.*

Our Blessed Founder, on leaving Padua, visited the holy Chapel of Our Lady of Loretto, and after that the tombs of the blessed Apostles at Rome and the other holy places there. In telling me about his journey, he convinced me that he had received great consolation and much advantage from this pilgrimage. And this is true, &c.

SEVENTH POINT

HIS VISIT TO THE BISHOP OF GENEVA, CLAUDE DE GRANIER, AFTER HIS RETURN FROM PADUA

Saint Chantal makes no answer on this point.

EIGHTH POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR AFTER HIS RETURN FROM PADUA UP TO THE TIME OF HIS ENTERING THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATE

Her answer on the eighth point was:

I declare that I have been told by many persons and, I fancy, by our Blessed Founder himself, that his parents wished him to marry, and that to please them he went to see a young lady, but I believe that this was while he was waiting until Divine Providence should open out to him a way of carrying out his design of making an entire dedication of himself in the ecclesiastical state. Indeed he told several credible persons as well as myself, that had he been heir to a dukedom, he would not have failed to enter Holy Orders; so greatly did he love and esteem that state of life, which he never repented having embraced. He imparted his resolution to the Reverend M. Louis de Sales, his first cousin, a man who was always held in the highest esteem and repute by all the clergy of that diocese, and whom I have already mentioned, and who, being questioned on the matter just before his death, declared that it was the absolute truth, that our Blessed Founder was firmly resolved to embrace the ecclesiastical state, whatever resistance his parents might oppose to his so doing.

M. de Sales, seeing that our Blessed Father, his cousin, was resolved to become a cleric, procured for him the dignity of Provost of the beforementioned Cathedral, the post being at that time vacant, although our Blessed Founder had never spoken to him on the subject at all; and when the documents relating to the matter arrived, this same M. de Sales made known to M. and Mme. de Boisy their son's intention of becoming a priest, to their great affliction. And this is true, &c.

NINTH POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR AS A DEACON

Her answer on the ninth point was:

I declare that while our Blessed Founder was still only a deacon, the late Monseigneur de Granier, his predecessor, commanded him to preach, and he himself told me that although he knew that he was quite unworthy to enter a pulpit, yet he replied that: *at his word he would let down the net.* He preached his first sermon on Saint John-Baptist's Day. When he heard the bell ring for the sermon, he was seized with such violent spasms and intense physical pain, that he was obliged to throw himself upon a bed. I do not remember what he told me afterwards as to the way in which he conquered this nervous agony, but I believe that he resigned himself absolutely into the hands of God,

leaving it to Him to make this act of preaching successful and redounding to His honour, according to His good pleasure; and certainly his prayer was granted, for as we are generally told, the people were marvellously edified by it. I have heard it declared, and by public report, that among those who listened to this his first sermon there was a nobleman of distinction, from the duchy of Chablais, named M. d'Avully, one of the most obstinate and learned of heretics, who was so much touched by it that he very soon afterwards presented himself for instruction. And this is true, &c.

TENTH POINT

THE MANNER IN WHICH HE FULFILLED BOTH HIS PRIESTLY DUTIES AND THOSE OF PROVOST

The same day, July 27th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, she replied on the tenth point:

I declare that it is a public fact, that our Blessed Father was made a Priest by the imposition of hands of the late Monseigneur Bishop de Granier, his predecessor, a man greatly revered in that neighbourhood on account of his sanctity, and who, as I have been assured, declared at the time that this young Priest would some day be one of the great lights of the Church and his successor in the bishopric. Our Blessed Founder, then, having been made Priest and

Provost of the Cathedral Church of Geneva, soon became eminent and a pattern and example of every virtue. We all know that he said Holy Mass, and was present every day at the Divine Offices, that he heard confessions, and often preached the word of God in an excellent way, and that he was looked upon, as various credible persons have assured me, not as an ordinary individual, but as a man of God. And this is true, &c.

ELEVENTH POINT

THE MISSION IN THE CHABLAIS

Her answer on the eleventh point was:

I declare that it is well and generally known that our Blessed Prelate was sent into the Chablais for the conversion of the people who had fallen into heresy about seventy years before. When Bishop de Granier desired him to do this, he remained silent for a moment, then answered him exactly as I have told you that he did the first time the Bishop commanded him to preach: *At your word I will let down the net.* Speaking on this subject to me, he added, I think, that relying only on God, and on the virtue of obedience to Him and to His servant, he went away to labour in the town of Thonon, where at first there were not more than six or seven Catholics. In this same town of Thonon, where

our Blessed Founder chiefly resided, he preached and instructed his little audience as assiduously as if it had been a crowded congregation, and God gave him a special consolation, which was this. One day on the Feast of St. Stephen, when he was preaching on the Invocation of the Saints, one of these seven Catholics, who was much disturbed by the doubts which he entertained as to the prayers of the saints, was absolutely confirmed in faith as regards this point, and also in his belief in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion, and told the holy Prelate this, thereby strengthening him in his resolution never to abstain from preaching because of the smallness of his audience.

He was for three whole years engaged in this work, in great peril of his life, as we may easily believe from the temper of the heretics, who, seeing that another doctrine than their own was brought amongst them, were often stirred with indignation, as I have been told by an eye-witness, a person most worthy of belief. The same person told me that on one occasion Père Esprit, a Capuchin, arriving at Thonon, went to hear a heretical sermon, at the conclusion of which he entered into a heated argument with the preacher, our Blessed Father being also present; upon which several people took up stones to stone them. The late Madame de Vallon, who was among the company and one of the most noisy, has since declared, that what put an end to the disturbance was the presence of our Blessed

Founder, who, by his sweet and gentle countenance, calmed the fury of the heretics as soon as they looked upon him. She herself, not long after this, was converted to the faith, and so efficaciously that she became his spiritual daughter, and was by him guided to such perfection that she lived, and a few years later died, in a most holy manner.

It is impossible to enumerate the dangers, fatigues, and toils which our Blessed Founder endured, in the course of the three years during which he laboured incessantly for the conversion of these people. He lived entirely on his own means, generally speaking, quite alone, and when, as was very rarely the case, he was assisted by his cousin, the before-mentioned M. Louis de Sales, he always defrayed his expenses also, doing the same when he left him in his place while he himself went, as he occasionally did, to visit his father.

The number of Catholics increased marvellously, and this determined our Blessed Founder to seek an audience of the Duke of Savoy at Turin, to beg his assistance both in regaining possession of the Churches in Thonon, and also in providing new labourers in the work and means of subsistence for them, all which he obtained. The result was that in a very short time, this region was converted to the holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith, several thousands of people being so converted. All this I learned from the before-mentioned M. de

Sales and Roland,* both being eye-witnesses of the fact, and our Blessed Founder also told me something on the subject. This is true, &c.

TWELFTH POINT

THE PROCESSION FROM THONON TO ANNEMASSE

Her answer on the twelfth point was:

I also declare that I have been assured by credible eye-witnesses, that our Blessed Founder conducted the procession from Thonon to Annemasse, a place nearly a league distant from Geneva. Also, when the Cross was solemnly elevated there, he discharged the duties of Parish Priest with unparalleled courage and at the risk of his life, the more so because it was the first time such a procession had been made and the Cross displayed in Thonon. As neither the churchwarden nor any other Catholic in Thonon was willing to carry it at the head of the procession for fear of being killed, our Blessed Founder was obliged to have it carried by one of his own people, and thus went on followed by the Catholics, saying the Litanies with a modesty and dignity so full of devotion that the late M. Louis de Sales, who met him, was greatly touched and edified by the spectacle, as he told me.

* His servant [*Tr.*].

THIRTEENTH POINT

THE BOOK OF THE STANDARD OF THE CROSS

Her answer on the thirteenth point was:

I declare that our Blessed Founder composed a treatise which he called *The Defence of the Cross;* I have seen it and read it. Its object was to refute the lies and blasphemies which a minister of Geneva had published against the most holy Cross, and from the time of our Blessed Founder's decease this book has been in great demand by many Bishops of France. And this is true, and known to the public.

FOURTEENTH POINT

RESULT OF THE MISSION IN THE CHABLAIS

Her answer on the fourteenth point was:

I declare that it is a well-known fact that, during the first year of our Blessed Founder's labours for the conversion of the Chablais, he was obliged to go to the fort of Allinges, situated on a lofty mountain about three miles distant from Thonon, on all Sundays and Holidays of obligation, and at other times when he could do so, to say Holy Mass and to preach, there being no other place nearer where the service could be held. Through the snow, in bad weather even,

he went thither on foot, unless, indeed, the weather was so desperate that his people compelled him to take a horse. Either he himself or the late Louis, Seigneur de Sales, or perhaps both, have told me that, on his way back, our Blessed Founder turned aside into other villages to preach, hear confessions, and do whatever was necessary for the welfare and advancement of souls. These journeys, however, were not accomplished without danger to our Blessed Founder. On one occasion he was met by a heretic with a drawn sword in his hand, but, although quite unarmed himself, the holy man met the approach of the ruffian with such gentle composure that the latter slunk away without offering him any injury, God thus preserving the life of His faithful servant. This is true, &c.

FIFTEENTH POINT

HOW HE CARRIED THE BLESSED SACRAMENT TO THE SICK DURING THE CHABLAIS MISSION

Her answer on the fifteenth point was:

I have been assured by credible eye-witnesses that our Blessed Founder in the first year of the mission went to get the Blessed Sacrament from Allinges, and in the subsequent years from a little chapel which had been given to Catholics, in order to carry it in secret to the sick. He carried it in his bosom, wrapped up in a corporal.

Once, when speaking to me of these occasions, our Blessed Founder said: *I held the Divine Saviour of our souls in my bosom, close to my heart;* making me understand that from so doing he received unspeakable sweetness and consolation. He told me also that he had explained to the Catholics that whenever they saw him passing by with a demeanour of unusual gravity and without saluting any one whom he met, they were to follow him, as this was a sign that he was bearing the Master of the Universe, Whom he was compelled to carry thus secretly for fear of losing his life. And this is true, &c.

SIXTEENTH POINT

HIS CONFERENCES WITH THE HERETICS

Her answer on the sixteenth point was:

Our Blessed Founder went twice to Geneva to endeavour to convert the arch-heretic Beza; and this by command of our Holy Father, Pope Clement VIII, as may be seen by the briefs sent to him on the subject. An enterprise fraught indeed with danger to his life, had it been discovered.

He went also to Geneva to try to convince by his arguments M. de la Faye, a Minister who by his artifices was retarding the absolute conversion of that Seigneur d'Avully, of whom I have already spoken as having been instructed

by our Blessed Founder in the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith. This Minister was constantly making appointments to meet his opponent, but always when the time fixed arrived he failed to appear. Our Blessed Founder therefore resolved to go and meet him on his own ground in Geneva. This he did, and as I have been told by many distinguished and credible persons, he absolutely convinced and silenced him, although with his accustomed gentleness and modesty.

It is also a well-known fact that he sought out the Ministers of Geneva and urged them to hold conferences with him on controversial points, which they always refused to do. On one occasion even he offered to go with six of the clergy to the city of Geneva, giving the heretical Ministers permission to confront this small band of Priests with as many of themselves as they pleased. This I have heard from the lips of our Blessed Founder himself, and he added, that his confidence that he should convince them rested solely on the power of the one true Catholic Faith and not on his own learning, or that of his assistants.

It is also a well-known fact that many, many times, at Paris, Grenoble, and various other places, he held conferences with heretics, and converted great numbers of them, even of their Ministers. The late Monseigneur Cardinal du Perron said, therefore, that if any one wished to confound the heretics, they must be brought to him, but if any one wished to convert them, they must be

taken to the Bishop of Geneva, who had received from God a special gift for that work. All this is true, &c.

SEVENTEENTH POINT

HIS DESIRE TO CONVERT ENGLAND AND SWITZERLAND

Her answer on the seventeenth point was:

It is well known that our Blessed Founder had a great desire to go to England and there labour for the conversion of that nation, a matter which he had greatly at heart, and for which, as he says in one of his writings, he prayed daily, fervently desiring that it would please God to gather this lost sheep into His arms and bring her back to His fold.

I have some recollection of having heard our Blessed Founder express a wish to spend a year in preaching in one of the Swiss Cantons. And this is true, &c.

EIGHTEENTH POINT

HIS BEING CHOSEN BY THE BISHOP OF GENEVA AS HIS COADJUTOR

Her answer on the eighteenth point was:

It is well known that the late Monseigneur Bishop de Granier, entirely of his own accord

and in fulfilment of his own wishes, brought about the appointment of our Blessed Founder as his coadjutor and successor in the bishopric, without any solicitation or intervention of the latter. On the contrary, he made many difficulties about accepting the office, considering himself quite unworthy of it, and as regards obtaining the confirmation of his election by the Duke of Savoy, he left that matter entirely to any one who chose to take it up, without any interference whatever on his own part. This is true, &c.

NINETEENTH POINT

HIS JOURNEY TO ROME AND HIS EXAMINATION

Her answer on the nineteenth point was:

It is well known that the late Monseigneur de Granier sent our Blessed Founder to Rome on certain matters of business, accompanied by a nephew of the said Seigneur de Granier, who was charged by his uncle to present him to His Holiness, in order to obtain consent to his becoming Monseigneur de Granier's coadjutor and successor in the bishopric. This consent the Holy Father, Clement VIII, granted most willingly, having examined him in the presence of several Cardinals, who all considered that he was most fit for the dignity. Our Blessed Founder told me that on this occasion, having commended himself to God, he went before this

holy and venerable assembly with his accustomed calmness, and with perfect indifference as to the result of the interview and examination. This is true, &c.

TWENTIETH POINT

HE WAS RECEIVED WITH GREAT JOY ON HIS RETURN FROM ROME, ETC.

Her answer on the twentieth point was:

I declare that all which is contained in this article is absolutely true, &c.

TWENTY-FIRST POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS THE BISHOP OF GENEVA, WHOSE COADJUTOR HE WAS

Her answer on the twenty-first point was:

Many credible persons have told me that our Blessed Prelate took no steps to obtain his Bulls from the Bishop's palace nor to bring about his consecration during the lifetime of the late Monseigneur de Granier. That good Bishop, however, desired greatly that he should do so, and wished him to accept a part of his revenue, but this our Blessed Founder steadily refused, and left the whole matter to Divine Providence without interfering in it at all. This is true, &c.

TWENTY-SECOND POINT

HIS BEHAVIOUR AT THE TIME OF HENRY IV'S INVASION OF SAVOY

There is no reply of Saint Chantal's to this point.

TWENTY-THIRD POINT

HIS CONSECRATION, AND PREPARATION FOR IT

Her answer on the twenty-third point was:

Our Blessed Founder told me that, when he was returning from Paris in the year 1602, he heard at Lyons of the death of the late Monseigneur de Granier, his predecessor, and at once consecrated himself to God, to serve Him and the souls whom He should put under his charge with no reservation of life or anything else whatever; and that he made this resolution with such strength, that he never fell away from it. When he arrived in his own country, he retired to Sales, and sent for the Reverend Père Fournier, a Jesuit. He prepared himself for his consecration by many spiritual exercises, self-examination, and a general confession, in all which he received great graces and divine consolations; renewing in his mind and heart resolutions to serve God faithfully in this charge which was about to be given him. He also prescribed rules for himself which I have seen,

written by his own hand, and have read. He chose for the day of his consecration the Feast of the Conception of Our Lady.

The ceremony took place in the Parish Church of St. Maurice of Thorens, where he had been baptized, and he was consecrated by His Grace the Archbishop of Vienne, the Bishop of St. Paul, and the Bishop of Damascus. This most humble servant of God, when he was teaching me how to prepare by meditation for a general confession, told me that when he was being consecrated it seemed to him quite clear, that the most adorable Trinity was imprinting inwardly on his soul those marks which the Bishops were making outwardly on his person; that he even seemed to see the most holy Mother of Our Lord taking him under her protection, and the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul at his side guarding him. I think I am giving you his very own words.

He also told me that, for about six weeks after his consecration, he was intensely absorbed in feelings of devotion, and in thoughts of the greatness of the ministry to which he was called and its exceeding dignity, so much so that he honoured even the smallest detail of its vestments. Some years later he wrote these words in a letter: *After my consecration as a Bishop, coming from my general confession, and from the company of the Saints and Angels among whom I had made my new resolutions, I spoke only like one who is a stranger to the world; and although the*

tumult of that world may since have somewhat weakened the passionate throbbing of my heart, yet, by the divine grace, its resolves remain firm and unchanged. Once again, writing of this event, our Blessed Founder says: "When I was consecrated Bishop, God took me away from myself, that He might take me to Himself, and then He gave me to the people. That is to say, He converted me from what I had been for myself to what I should be for them, and thus may it come to pass that being taken away from ourselves, we may be converted to Him by the sovereign perfection of His most holy love!"

As the reverend deponent, on account of the lateness of the hour, did not pursue the subject any further, she resumed it the following day, July 28th, in the presence of the Most Illustrious and Right Reverend André Frémyot, Lord Archbishop of Bourges, the Lord Bishop of Belley, and the Reverend M. George Ramus, the appointed Judges.

To continue the subject of the twenty-third point: after the consecration, our Blessed Founder came to this town of Annecy, the place of his residence, where he was received with the honours customary on such occasions; both clergy and people unanimously receiving him with extraordinary enthusiasm, expressing in every possible way their delight at having for their father and

pastor one whom they esteemed so highly. Our Blessed Founder responded with incredible sweetness and graciousness. And this is true, &c.

TWENTY-FOURTH POINT

HIS FAITH

Her answer on the twenty-fourth point was:

I have already mentioned in the second point that it is a well-known fact that our Blessed Founder was brought up and nourished by his parents from his childhood, in the most holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith; that he persevered therein to the very end of his life, and was by all who knew him admired for this constancy and perseverance. His actions, his words, his sermons, his books, the fatigues and toils which he underwent from the time when he was first called to the Holy Order of the Priesthood, the very great number of heretics whom he converted to the Catholic Faith, and of Catholics whom he reclaimed from an evil life, as well as the frequent controversies which he held with the heretics until the very end of his life, proclaim this truth aloud. As I have already said, it is well known that for three whole years our Blessed Founder laboured for the conversion of the heretics of the Chablais, and was generally called the Apostle of that district.

The holy Prelate on his return from this mission wrote to me as follows: "I have just returned," he says, "from the very extremity of my diocese, which borders on Switzerland, having completed the establishment of thirty-three parishes, in which, eleven years ago, there were only Ministers and heretics. For three years I was quite alone there, preaching the Catholic Faith, and God has granted me on this journey the very fullest consolation, for whereas formerly I could only find a hundred Catholics in the whole of the Chablais, I was now not able to find a hundred Huguenots." And this is true, &c.

With regard to this same twenty-fourth point, I declare that it is certain that all those who had intercourse with our Blessed Prelate, observed his wonderful understanding and illumination in all the mysteries of our holy Faith, feeling convinced that he had received this gift of understanding in an eminent degree. Indeed, one day when he was instructing me on this subject, he told me most admirable things about the excellence of the holy Catholic Faith, adding that God had endowed him with much light and knowledge for the understanding of its mysteries, and that he thought he possessed the mind and intention of the Church respecting the mysteries which she teaches to her children; and indeed there could not be a soul more closely united to the Faith of Holy Church than was his. I know his tender, fervent love for Holy Church, and

that he honoured and obeyed her in her smallest commands.

The learned who conversed with him declared, that God had imbued his mind with extraordinary light and knowledge for the explanation of the most difficult passages of Holy Scripture, which he made clear and easy of understanding alike to the wise and to the simple, so that both were perfectly satisfied. The Reverend Father Dom Jean de Saint-François, General of the Feuillants, the Reverend Father Louis de la Rivière, Minim, and the Reverend Philibert de la Bonneville, Provincial of the Capuchin Fathers, all bear open witness, in the books which they have written concerning his life, to this truth.

For my own part, I saw plainly that this gift of Faith bestowed upon our Blessed Father was accompanied by great clearness and certainty, and by extraordinary spiritual savour and sweetness. Indeed God had shed into the inmost recesses of his soul so clear a light, that he saw the truths of the Faith with unclouded vision; and I know that he submitted his understanding to those truths with an absolute subjection of mind and will; he called the place in which this light reigned, the sanctuary of God, into which nothing might enter but the soul alone with God.

On one occasion, our Blessed Founder being in company with the deputies of the Most Christian King, in the bailiwick of Gex, which belonged to his diocese, whither he had gone to

re-establish the holy practices of the Catholic Religion in several parishes, wrote—and I have seen and read the letters written with his own hand—as follows: "Alas! I see these poor wandering sheep, I draw near to them, and see and feel how blind they are. Oh my God, the beauty of our holy Faith is so overwhelming, that I shall surely die of love for it, and I know full well that the precious gift which God has bestowed upon me should be safely treasured and stored in a heart full of devotion and sweetness. Thank this divine light, which sheds its rays so mercifully within my heart, that the more I find myself in the midst of those who have it not, the more clearly and distinctly I see its splendours and its sweetness. May God, my helper, make use of me and of my acts for His glory, even as I wish it."

At another time, our Blessed Founder, writing about the conversion of two heretics, persons of distinction, to receive whom into the bosom of the Church he had travelled a distance of about fifty miles, says: "What thanks ought I not to render to the great God that I, beset by so many dangers of falling into heresy, tempted by so many allurements when I was young, frail, and feeble, and living so long in the very midst of heretics, yet never have wished even to gaze upon heresy except to express my contempt for it, and that my weak and youthful mind was never in the very least disturbed by this wretched disorder whilst perusing all their most poisonous works

Oh my God ! when I think of this immense benefit, I shudder at my own ingratitude."

Thus it was, that when life was ebbing away, and he was asked if he had any doubts as to the Faith, since many Saints had in their last moments been troubled by such temptations, he replied humbly but firmly: *That would indeed be high treason on my part.*

A person told me that, having battled for two whole years with a strong temptation against belief in the most Holy Sacrament, she was delivered from it the very first time she spoke of it to our Blessed Founder, and I myself, after years of a similar struggle, only obtained relief from it through his instructions, and I firmly believe that it was through his prayers that I at last obtained entire deliverance from it. He assured me with incredible firmness, that the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith was the one and only path to heaven, that there was no other, and that whatever difficulties we might meet on the way, we must still always follow it. He told me these things and many others so firmly as to give me extraordinary strength against this temptation, and henceforth I remained encouraged and wholly satisfied on the subject. All this is true.

TWENTY-FIFTH POINT

HIS HOPE

Her answer on the twenty-fifth point was:

When conversing with our Blessed Founder I plainly saw that God had bestowed on him a tender, unfailing, and appreciative love for those good things which are promised to us in the life to come; and which I know he hoped for with a humble confidence in the mercy of God, and in the Sacred Passion of Our Lord. His hopes were always tending towards eternal bliss. I think that this fact is established by more than a hundred passages to be found in his letters.

"Oh!" he cries, "how happy a thing it is to live piously in this mortal life, but how happy it will be to live gloriously in heaven!"

He frankly confessed that, looking at his own wretchedness, he deserved nothing but hell, but that, considering the infinite merits of the Passion of his Saviour and the greatness of His mercy, he hoped, with humble confidence, to possess in heaven those infinite joys which are prepared for the children of God. "Ah!" he cried, "shall we not one day be all together in heaven? I hope so, and I rejoice in the thought."

On another occasion he said to me: "My soul is always growing more and more closely united to God, or at least it seems to me that

every day it burns more and more fervently with the love of things eternal and of holy charity."

Amid the afflictions of this life, he would often say: "We must take courage, we shall soon go up above; yes, we must hope most firmly that we shall live for ever. What would Our Lord do with His gift of eternal life if He did not bestow it upon poor, miserable little souls like ours?"

He said one day to a great Prelate, Monseigneur the Bishop of Belley, who repeated it afterwards to us in a sermon, that we must die between two pillows, as it were; one the humble confession, that we deserve nothing but hell; the other that of a perfect trust in the mercy of God, which will give us paradise.

I remember that once, when I was very dangerously ill and not expected to recover, our Blessed Founder came to me to console me and to assist me in my last journey, and he told me to lay my head down at the foot of the Cross, and there remain motionless, to receive, as a little lizard in the rock might receive, the drops of the most Precious Blood flowing down from that Cross, and to do this with perfect trust in the mercy of Our Lord.

"I wish," said our Blessed Founder to me on another occasion, "that I could but tell you the feeling which I had to-day at Holy Communion; *the sweetness of my hope—nay, rather, of my certainty—that my heart will be one day wholly swallowed up in the love of the Heart of Jesus.*"

Again, he wrote thus: "It seems to me that my soul is somewhat more firmly established in the hope which it has always had, of being one day able to enjoy all that the Death and Resurrection of Our Lord has purchased for it. During the days of Holy Week and ever since, He has made me see more clearly, not indeed sensibly, but with certainty and intellectual consolation, and all in the highest point of the mind, His sacred precepts, and evangelical maxims, more clearly I repeat, and more sweetly than ever before; * and I cannot wonder sufficiently that, having always had so high an esteem for these maxims and for the doctrines of the Cross, I have yet taken so little care about practising them. And, were I to return to the world with my present feelings, I do not believe that all the wisdom of the flesh and of the children of this generation could ever shake me in my firm conviction that its wisdom is a vain imagination and utter folly."

Again he says: "Look at the passing away of our dear friends from this world; surely it is a sight sweet to look upon, since they go from us to people heaven and to enhance the glory of our King. One day—a day known only to God—we shall go to them; meanwhile let us diligently learn the songs of divine love, so that we may sing them perfectly all through a blessed eternity."

* *Cf.* Wilberforce's Introduction to Blosius' *Book of Spiritual Instruction*, p. xxxixz.

Again, our Blessed Founder exclaims: "Oh my God! what consolation I feel in the certainty that we shall be one day eternally united in the will to serve and praise God! May His Divine Providence lead us by whatever way seems best to Him, only I hope—nay, I am sure—that we shall come at last to that one goal, that we shall reach at last the haven. Thanks be to God! I have this confidence. Let us be happy in this service, happy and joyous without excess or levity, secure without presumption."

On one occasion, when he was crossing the Lake of Geneva in a little light boat, he expressed his delight at having nothing but a thin plank between him and death, excepting the care of Divine Providence. "My soul is ever at home in its trust in Divine Providence. Thou, my God, didst teach me that lesson from my earliest years, and from that time to this I have declared and will declare Thy praises."

In the year, in which he died, our Blessed Founder wrote thus: "I am going to *make a review* of my conscience * so as to be able to begin my life afresh as Our Lord desires me to do; that, as these perishable years pass one by one away, I may prepare for the eternal years, always looking to the Cross of my Saviour with sighs and unutterable longings. It seems to me that my soul strains more and more after the purity of the service of God, and after eternity.

* As to St. Francis' understanding of the phrase *review of conscience*, see his *Spiritual Conferences*, p. 86, new edition [*Ed.*].

Oh my God! how happy should I be, if one day, after Holy Communion, I should find my own wretched heart gone from my breast, and the Heart of my Saviour in its place."

All these things he either said or wrote to me, while instructing and encouraging me to press forward ardently towards eternity, and to a more whole-hearted service of Our Lord, and from these proofs which I have brought forward, it can easily be gathered, how great was his Hope. And this is true, &c.

TWENTY-SIXTH POINT

HIS LOVE OF GOD

Her answer on the twenty-sixth point was:

I have already said that I saw plainly, by the words and actions of our Blessed Founder, that his love for God held a sovereign authority and dominion over all his passions and affections. I believe, from what I have observed, that whatever may have been the failings of our Blessed Founder, they proceeded only from mere human frailty, or being taken suddenly by surprise. I believe, moreover, that his life was spent in the most exact observance of the divine commands of God, and in the keeping of the Evangelical Counsels and Maxims, as far as his condition and human weakness would permit. I think it is well known that all the actions of his life were

the outcome and the token of that divine love which dominated his soul so powerfully. Our Blessed Founder composed an admirable treatise in twelve books on this subject, and in it I notice how simply and unconsciously he draws his own portrait.

On one occasion, speaking to a person whom he loved as himself, of that supreme love which he bore towards God, he said to him: "If God were to command me to offer you up in sacrifice, as he commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac his son, I would do it." And indeed by his actions he showed that he would have made this sacrifice to the Divine Will, with unexampled courage and love.

This love of God made him undertake innumerable labours to bring about the conversion of heretics for the divine glory, in which labours his life, as has been said, was often exposed to very great dangers. So many souls guided by him along the way of perfection, so many thousands of sermons preached by him in various places, all his toils in reforming monasteries and establishing the Order which he himself absolutely instituted, finally his entire devotion of himself to each and all that he might win them for Our Lord—all these things are truths which render an ample testimony to the most pure and perfect love of our Blessed Founder for God.

Once he wrote to me as follows: "This morning I have been thinking of nothing else but of that eternity of happiness which awaits us in

heaven; a happiness, however, which would be little or nothing, were it not for the unchanging, ever-present love of the great God, Who reigns there always. For truly I believe that paradise would be worth purchasing at the cost of all the pains of hell, if the love of God could be there; and if hell were a fire burning with the love of God, it seems to me that these torments would be desirable. All the delights of heaven are in my sight as nothing compared to this supreme love. Ah! we must now at once, without delay, lift up our hearts to our immortal King, and live for Him alone. If you did but know how He deals with my heart, you would thank Him for His goodness, and entreat Him to give me the spirit of counsel and of strength, so that I may rightly fulfil those inspirations of wisdom and understanding which He bestows on me."

On another occasion he wrote as follows: "I end this year desiring not only greatly but passionately, with a longing which is almost pain, to advance more and more, and from this very moment, in that holy love which is always so dear to me. May God reign eternally over my heart! I tell you that my heart is made for that only."

Again: "What lofty, ardent, eager longings I feel within me!" he cries; "longings always strengthened by this divine love! and indeed I speak the truth when I declare that this love so rules my heart that, notwithstanding its weaknesses, it is wholly dedicated to the Divine

Majesty, and cares for nothing but His glory. Indeed we belong to God alone, and have no other ambition than to be His. If there were within me one single fibre that did not cling to Him in affection and did not come from Him, I would instantly tear it out. Yes, if there were one solitary spot in my heart unmarked by the Crucifix, I would have none of it."

Another time our Blessed Founder said: "Let me love God or die. Either let my heart be torn from me, or let it be filled with nothing but the love of God. Ah! why are we not indeed full of it to overflowing? You cannot imagine how fervently I desire this at the present moment. Oh my God! why should we live through the coming year unless that we may love Thy Goodness better? Let it take us out of this world, or else take this world away from us. Either let it bring us to our death, or else make us love His death better than our own life."

Our Blessed Founder's ordinary confessor told me—and I am myself convinced of the fact—that our dear Father never did anything for the sake of escaping hell, or of deserving heaven; but that he performed all his actions simply and solely for the love of God, Whom he feared because he loved Him, and whom he loved because He is so worthy of being loved and for the love of Himself. Therefore he said that the sovereign law of his heart was the highest glory of the love of God.

Shortly before his death he wrote to me thus:

"I can now say nothing about my soul except that more and more it is consumed with an ardent longing to esteem all things worthless save only the love of our crucified Lord."

Our Blessed Founder had a most tender love for the Passion of Our Saviour, and his heart was so penetrated with and steeped in the sweetness of this agony that he often cried aloud: "O Love, how sorrowful thou art! O sorrow, how loving thou art!"

I have seen him so much overcome by this emotion that he could scarcely speak or restrain his tears. "May the day of the sacred Passion of our Master," he would exclaim, "be ever the day dearest to our hearts!"

Again: "Oh!" he cried, "what consolation the thought of the death and burial of Our Saviour has brought to my mind! Oh my God! if this Saviour has done so much for us, what shall not we do for Him! If He has poured forth His life for us, why should we not bring our own lives into entire subjection to His most pure service and love?"

Our Blessed Founder gave these and innumerable other proofs of that divine love with which his heart burned and was consumed, and all these things were either told to me in his instructions, or I have seen and read them in his own handwriting.

TWENTY-SEVENTH POINT

HIS LOVE FOR HIS NEIGHBOUR

Her answer on the twenty-seventh point was:

It is well known to all those who came into contact with our Blessed Founder, that his charity towards his neighbour was most perfect in its kind and in its extent. I have no hesitation in declaring what I fully believe, that he possessed this virtue in the highest degree, and practised it faithfully to the very end of his life with the greatest perfection. Indeed for about nineteen years, during which time I had the happiness of frequent intercourse with him, both before I entered religion and afterwards, I never knew him to fail in doing all the good and rendering all the service in his power to his neighbour. That was a matter in which he never spared himself. This I know and have seen, and have had more experience on the subject than I can possibly tell you.

Our Blessed Founder loved God in man, and man in God, and used to say that, except in God, he did not desire to be anything to any one, nor was any one anything to him. He was full of charity, full of true and universal love for souls. "For," he would say, "it has pleased God to make my heart thus. My poor neighbour! I wish to love him so much, so very much; and yet at the same time I feel that I really love

none but God and all souls for God, and that what is not God or for God is nothing to me."

Another time he wrote to me thus: "Ah, when shall we be all steeped, as it were, in sweetness and tenderness towards our neighbours? When shall we look upon their souls as hidden in the sacred breast of Our Saviour. Alas! whoever looks upon his neighbour in any other place but that, runs the risk of loving him neither purely, steadfastly, nor impartially. But there who would not love him? who would not bear with him? who would not put up with his imperfections? who would find him unattractive or wearisome? for this neighbour, resting on the breast, hidden in the Heart of our Divine Saviour, is there so much loved and so lovable, that the Lover dies for love of him."

He even told me once, speaking of the pestilence which it was feared at that time might break out in our city, that should it do so, he would not stir from the place, but would remain to give all possible help to the souls of the poor plague-stricken inhabitants, telling me exactly how he should arrange matters and behave on the occasion.

The same day, July 28th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, she continued her deposition on the twenty-seventh point in these terms:

Continuing the subject of the twenty-seventh point, I may tell you that a certain lady of quality,

who had fallen into sin, desired to retire from the world into one of our Houses. I consulted our Blessed Founder on the subject, and he replied: "You must not ask my advice about that, for I am biassed always by charity." It is indeed perfectly well known that he never rejected any one, miserable sinner though he or she might be. He often gave large alms to women leading bad lives, that he might thus reclaim them. If any of them fell back again into sin, and then after a while once more had recourse to him, he received them with his accustomed kindliness, and when his servants told him that it was only time and money wasted, he replied that it was indeed a miserable state of things, but that while there was any hope of the conversion of sinners, we must help them.

On one occasion a lay sister, one of our novices, got it into her head that she would like to take the black veil. I could not make up my mind to grant such a request, and consulted our Blessed Founder, who said: "Where their humility fails them, our charity must abound."

From all these examples we see plainly that his love for his neighbour was one of perfect charity, for he was absolutely impartial in serving rich and poor; he made no difference between them; it was all one to him, provided that God was equally glorified.

Many believe—and I among the rest—that his life was actually worn out and shortened by this loving devotion to his neighbour's service,

for he often neglected food and sleep for it, and underwent hardships and privations which would have been intolerable to any other man. This I know.

He used to say, that we must never refuse our neighbour any aid or comfort which we have it in our power to give him. When it was represented to him that he was injuring his health, and that it would be impossible for him to drag on such a laborious and painful existence very long, he replied gently, that ten years more or less of life were nothing. In short, our Blessed Founder, as far as he could, extended a loving and universal care towards his neighbour, as all those who came in contact with him bear witness.

He never refused to see any one, whatever the hour might be, and however important the business which was occupying him at the time. He scarcely ever dismissed those who came to see him, nor did he ever show the slightest weariness of, or distaste to their conversation. When he was blamed for this easy urbanity, which allowed so much of his time to be wasted, they said, upon persons of small consideration, and matters of slight importance, he would answer gently: "These little people, whom you consider so insignificant, have as much need to be heard and helped in their affairs, as the great people in theirs. If one soul is as much troubled about a mere nothing as another would be about some great matter, it must equally be relieved and sent away satisfied. Little affairs are just as im-

portant to poor people as great ones to the rich. Are we not debtors to all? They come in search of consolation; must we not give it to them?"

Our Blessed Founder indeed received all sorts of people, with such gracious and kindly looks and gestures, and with such encouraging words, that although his whole appearance was exceedingly grave and majestic, no one was afraid to approach him, and all were ready to tell him their wants with perfect confidence. Nor was it ever known that any one left his presence unsatisfied, or without a feeling of love full of respect and esteem for his incomparable kindness and charity.

In fact it is impossible to say on how many occasions he rendered services and gave aid to his neighbour, towards whom he never displayed the faintest dislike or contempt, and whose churlishness—when it was exhibited—he never seemed to notice. I have often observed that he put up with the follies and really impertinent ill-humours of some people that he might help and console them. It seemed as if he only lived to serve and comfort his neighbours.

Our Blessed Founder's Confessor has told me that when he was going out and saw any poor people in his lobby or courtyard, he would go up to them and take their papers from them, to have them quickly attended to; and if he was surrounded by persons of quality, he would send one of his household to these poor petitioners, to see that their business was despatched at once.

When he could not grant what was asked of him, because it would have been unjust to do so, he spoke so kindly, and showed such regret at being obliged to give a refusal, that all the sting was taken out of it.

He used to say that we should be very careful not to annoy or inconvenience any one; that he would have liked to oblige all, as indeed he did whenever it was possible, but that as far as could be, he placed himself under obligation to no one.

He also helped his neighbour with his own means, although they were not large. It is true, however, that God so blessed him that, almost miraculously he was able to provide for the support of his episcopal household, which was a considerable one, and also for the continual alms and hospitalities which he dispensed. He gave a lodging to any Monks who might be passing by and who had no House of their Order in the town, and to many Ecclesiastics who came here for different purposes. And all this charity he exercised with so much affectionate kindness, that his guests were delighted with their reception, as well as with the respectful and generous manner with which they were waited on and entertained.

Besides daily almsgiving, there was a general dole made twice a week, on Mondays and Thursdays; and at a period of the year when the people were more pinched and straitened by poverty, he commanded a more ample distribu-

tion to be made. Several credible eye-witnesses, and indeed his own Almoner himself, declare that our Blessed Founder never refused alms to any one, whether he were a stranger or not; and if the person who carried his alms did not happen to be at hand, he would borrow from some one, giving to each according to his present necessities.

The last time he was in Paris, he asked us to lend him eight or ten crowns, giving us in pledge a little box of lapis-lazuli, and I know positively that he wanted this money for a poor young lady, whom I think he had converted to the Catholic Faith, or on whom he had conferred some other great spiritual benefit.

A worthy man in this city came to ask our Blessed Founder to lend him some money. He felt it impossible to refuse, although he had none, because he knew that the good man wanted to send it to his son, who was then pursuing his studies in Paris. Our Blessed Founder came therefore to borrow it of us, telling me that it was more a gift than a loan, as indeed, I believe it was, but truly he has well repaid us for it.

Often he gave away his clothes, his linen, and his shoes and stockings. Once even he took the very shoes he was wearing off his feet, to give to some needy claimant. This I was assured of by his valet, an eye-witness of the fact. This man was also employed to purchase all that was wanted to be distributed among the necessitous poor; and I verily believe that if

our Blessed Founder had had the management of his own money, he would not have been able to refrain from distributing it all in such charities.

Two Jesuit Fathers told me, the year after our Blessed Founder's death, that they had had some conversation with a schoolmaster in a straggling village of Faucigny, who showed them an undervest which he had given to him. One winter, when the poor man was very badly clothed, our Blessed Founder asked him if he had nothing better to wear? He said no, upon which our good Father went into his study, took off his undervest, and having dressed again without it, brought it to him secretly and gave it to him, and this vest is now held in great veneration. From what these Fathers told me, many people borrowed it to put it upon the sick; and if I remember rightly, they also told me that they took a piece of this same undervest with great reverence and devotion and preserved it as a relic. Indeed they expressed to me deep reverence and devotion for our Blessed Founder, and found great consolation in offering their prayers at his tomb.

His Confessor, who was an eye-witness, assured me, that the alms bestowed by him on the bashful poor were innumerable. Our Blessed Founder himself sought them out, or had secret inquiries made after them by others, and then with his own hands or through those of his Almoners, or some trusty person, distributed generous alms to them. He did this also to some of his

penitents after confession, and impressed upon them, as I am told, that they were to apply to him always in this mode. One of his Almoners told me that he often had to make up little packets of money for our Blessed Founder to give away after confessions, and that he knew from what the Father said himself, that if he had had the handling of his own revenue, and had not felt that it would be wronging his household more than himself to do so, he would have expended the whole of it in similar charities. When he was away from home he gave orders that these alms should be distributed just the same, and it is certain that no person or place in the town, including hospitals and monasteries, ever wanted for any help he could give them, if he were aware of their needs. When our Order was first established we were somewhat needy; and our Blessed Founder, knowing this, brought us about twelve or fifteen crowns out of a bill of exchange which had fallen in to him, and which he seized upon, without the knowledge of the person who managed his temporal affairs.

The good Father visited the hospitals, the sick, and prisoners, to the great consolation of these poor sufferers, who were encouraged by him to bear their pains and afflictions patiently. Even to persons of good means, he never failed to offer whatever he happened to have in his own house which he thought might relieve them.

He had ready cooked food taken to the poor, and when he thought they needed a doctor, sent

one to visit them, and this he did especially in the case of strangers. Many sent to beg from what was left upon his plate after meals, or for anything that he had touched. This was done especially by the Poor Clares, and by us also sometimes.

Our Blessed Founder gave liberal alms to all the mendicant religious houses in the town, particularly to the Capuchin Fathers. He also desired his dispenser to distribute to them whatever they needed, either for their sick or for any chance comers; sometimes he would dine with them, always taking care to send on beforehand the provisions for the meal.

On Maundy Thursday, when he was in this town, he washed the feet of thirteen poor men, in remembrance of the Last Supper, kissing their feet tenderly, soiled and repulsive though they were. This charitable act he performed with the most admirable devotion and humility. Before I entered religion, I have seen him do this, and it was a sight not to be forgotten; afterwards he entertained the poor men at dinner, and gave to each a handsome present of money.

Almost all the sick sent entreaties to our good Father, that he would either come and give them his holy blessing or would at least send it to them, feeling certain that if they received it they would be relieved. Indeed it was a general belief that, if any one had been lingering on in weakness and pain for a long time, he would, if he could obtain this blessing, either soon

recover, or die a speedy and very happy death, which we know by experience to have been the case.

Our Blessed Founder was most generous and charitable in various ways to many converts from Geneva and other places, who came to him for help and protection. Some of them he kept for a long time in his own house, others he had taught trades. He placed the daughter of Captain Larose, who had left Geneva with his whole family (this daughter being a nun), with the Poor Clares of Annecy, and kept her there at his own expense, bestowing many kindnesses upon her. To others he gave large pensions, in one notable instance to a Priest, one M. Boucard, who had become a pervert, and for many years had been a Minister at Lausanne. As he afterwards returned to the Faith, our Blessed Founder promised him a large pension, which he continued to pay him up to the time of his death, and this good Father used to say that if he had had large means he would have taken most of the inhabitants of Geneva away from the place.

He also gave a pension to two poor old Priests, to a man who was paralysed, and to three other people. In one instance, when he had no money to provide for the absolute needs of a poor Parish Priest, he gave two silver candlesticks. To another worthy man, who had sustained losses and misfortunes in consequence of his abjuring heresy, he gave a silver vase, considering that a

large gold coin which he had already bestowed on him would not be sufficient for his present necessities.

It would be impossible for me to tell you how much help, spiritual as well as temporal, our Blessed Founder gave to all sorts of people, but especially to Monks and Priests, converted to the Faith.

He also gave a great many presents to Churches. To his own Cathedral Church of Saint-Pierre he gave six tall silver candlesticks and a large lamp of the same precious metal, also a rich chasuble of stiff cloth of gold, and tunics and dalmatics to match. He gave our Church of the Visitation in this town of Annecy a very beautiful brocaded chasuble. To the Church at Thorens in which he was baptized, and to that of Viuz, which was in his diocese, he gave two large and beautiful pictures richly framed, and to various other Churches in different places he gave similar presents.

I am forgetting to mention that our Blessed Founder was exceedingly generous to a poor young lady who wished to take the veil in this very Convent of the Visitation, giving four hundred gold crowns to our Convent for her dowry.

I know that to another young lady who feared she would not have the means required to enable her to enter religion in this very House, he promised her dowry, telling her that she was not to be troubled, for that he would give her

all that was needed, and even the pension for the year of her noviciate.

Always eager to do good to his neighbour, he offered on one occasion the whole of his silver plate to redeem a Knight of Malta who was a prisoner in the hands of the Turks, the Knight being a native of this district and one of the family of Serisier.

I remember also that one year, when there was a great scarcity of corn in the place and it was exceedingly dear, our Blessed Founder distributed quantities of corn through the Confessors, who knew the individual needs of the people.

The last time he visited Piedmont, the Princess of that country presented him with a most magnificent diamond, and he at once exclaimed: "This will be useful to our poor people!"

Part of these things which I have narrated, I learned from our Blessed Founder himself and from other well-authenticated sources, and indeed they are for the most part well known to the public.

I repeat, that the alms and charities bestowed by our Blessed Founder on his neighbour in all ways which were possible to him, were so large, considering the smallness of his income, as to be almost incredible and altogether admirable. Indeed, nothing but a special blessing, or a miracle, could have made such munificence possible; and what enhanced the beauty of this charity was that it was prompted by his tender and perfect love for his neighbour, a love whose

intensity cannot be fully expressed, and the effects of which far surpass the bounds of imagination.

He was a great enemy to litigation; on one occasion, hearing of a father and son going to law against one another, he tried to make peace between them, and finding that it only required a little money to settle their dispute, he produced his silver candlesticks, as a means of putting an end to both contention and lawsuit.

This is a well-known fact.

TWENTY-EIGHTH POINT

HIS PRACTICE OF THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

§ 1. HIS PRUDENCE

On the 29th of the same month of July, at seven o'clock in the morning, she replied on the twenty-eighth point as follows:

It is well known that the prudence of our Blessed Founder was almost superhuman; I do not believe there ever was a man more circumspect and discreet than he was in all his words and actions. He did everything wisely, sedately, and calmly; this was attributed to the strength of his judgment, which was certainly quite unusually solid and penetrating. He spoke with such wisdom, and his words were so persuasive and so precise in their meaning, that all who

listened to him, however much at variance with each other, were soon calmed and appeased. I remember instances of this occurring twice in the palace of His Grace, the Archbishop of Bourges,* who had invited our Blessed Founder to meet at dinner some learned personages, both ecclesiastical and legal. Their conversation turned on various topics of the highest interest, and they grew heated in discussing them. He listened to them for a long time in silence, then spoke; and after a very few words from him, all were quieted and surrendered to his judgment.

He never made quick repartees, nor did he even set himself in opposition to what was wrong, except with mature deliberation, saying that we must not commit faults ourselves when making a stand against the faults of others. The admirable order which he introduced into his diocese, his behaviour towards all sorts of persons in business matters of every kind, none of which were ever known to go wrong in his hands, are a certain proof of his prudence; indeed all his actions were done solely for the glory of God, with no other aim, as he has often told me, than that of serving Him.

Our Blessed Founder hated worldly prudence, as may be seen by the above-mentioned facts. A Monk having asked him on one occasion if it was permitted to evade worldly prudence, he replied coldly but yet gently: "I am not by any means one of its admirers."

* St. J. F. de Chantal's brother [*Tr.*]. † *d'éluder.*

He wrote to me once as follows: "By God's help, I will never cease to bear in mind the maxim that we must never suffer our lives to be ruled or guided by worldly prudence, but rather by faith and by the Gospel; for this worldly prudence is truly nothing but foolishness. Oh my God! keep us for ever from that evil, and make us live continually under the guidance of the spirit of the Gospel, which is gentle, simple, loving, and which returns good for evil."

The prudence of our Blessed Founder displayed itself in the simplicity of a perfect confidence in and total dependence on the Providence of God, as I well know, and as is also known to others.

§ 2. HIS JUSTICE

As regards justice, I declare it to be an acknowledged fact that our Blessed Prelate was as just towards God as it is possible to be in this our mortal state. To Him alone he ascribed the honour of all that he did, to himself none, and he was deeply grateful to God for all the benefits which he received from Him.

He once said to me, speaking of a review * of his conscience he had just made, and which he was accustomed to repeat several times a year, that thereby, and by some additional spiritual exercises, he, so to speak, wound up his heart and renewed his resolution of serving God more whole-heartedly and holily than ever. By so

* See note to twenty-fifth point, p. 88.

doing, he told me in writing, he trusted to serve God in justice and holiness all the days of his life.

In all that concerned divine worship he acted with the greatest reverence, devotion, and dignity, always speaking of God, of the Saints, and of holy things, with a respect and feeling which showed how great was the piety and love which he had for God.

He used to say that we should always speak of God *as* God—that we must never pronounce the sacred name of Jesus without reverence. He would not suffer it to be mentioned in idle or profane writings, or on occasions which partook of that character. He always reproved this fault severely, neither would he allow people to complain of the weather being too cold or too hot, as he said that was finding fault with the ordering of Divine Providence.

Our Blessed Founder had, I have observed, a general devotion for the Saints and for all the servants of God, but he venerated in an especial manner the sanctity of those who had, with the widest and most all-embracing charity, suffered and laboured for their neighbour. He delighted to speak and to preach on the subject of their virtues, which he exalted to the very skies. This he did especially in the case of the Blessed Virgin, of the Prince of the Apostles, and of St. Joseph, whom he often mentioned in his Mass. He had a great devotion to his Angels, the two Saints John, St. Louis, King of France,

St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Bernard. When he preached, as he generally did, on their feasts, he did so with extraordinary fervour, and burning eloquence. He also had a special devotion to St. Charles Borromeo, and went to Milan on purpose to visit his relics, deriving from them great consolation. Again, he had a special devotion to penitents, to St. Mary Magdalen, to the good thief, and to those who had laboured much for the Church, and had most absolutely abandoned themselves to the care of Divine Providence, such as St. Francis Xavier.

He had the deepest respect for the Holy Scriptures, and, as I have already said, was distinguished by his unusual knowledge and understanding of them. He told one of his chaplains that he considered this to be a very special grace bestowed on him by God.

Our Blessed Founder honoured all the ceremonies and ordinances of Holy Church, and submitted himself to them, as many people remarked. Speaking once to the chaplain of a great Prelate, so that he should draw his attention to his omission of some trifling ceremonies in saying Mass, he added: *We must submit ourselves in full obedience to what is laid down for us.*

He entertained the very deepest reverence towards the holy Apostolic See, the Pope, the Cardinals, the Bishops, and all other officers of the Church, paying them extraordinary deference, and speaking of them with all possible respect. I am told that on one occasion orders from the

Holy Father were brought to our Blessed Founder, demanding the payment of a certain sum of money by the benefices in his diocese. Some Ecclesiastics who were with him when the order arrived were greatly astonished and perturbed by it, considering that the poverty of the benefices could not support such a drain upon their resources. Our Blessed Founder allowed them to give vent to their agitation for a little while and then said: *The spiritual Superior at the request of the temporal Superior commands: what is there to be said about it? We must obey.* And at the same time he gave directions for the immediate carrying out of this order.

We are told that, in the arrangement of ecclesiastical matters, he used to say that he was guided entirely by the laws and regulations of the sacred Council of Trent.

He paid great honour to Ecclesiastics, to each according to his special dignity; he ordered his servants to treat them all with the deepest respect, to whatever office they were dedicated for the service of the Church.

He would never allow Priests, even those who formed part of his household, to wait upon him in any way.

As regards Monks, he respected, assisted, and cherished all equally, showing no partiality whatever in his affection, although he held those who were of the most use to the Church and to souls in especial honour.

It is well known that our Blessed Founder

watched carefully over his flock; making frequent visitations through the length and breadth of his diocese, as much for the benefit of the Churches, as for that of private individuals and of Religious Houses, which were often in need of his services.

It is equally well known that he rendered to his neighbour, and especially to the members of his beloved flock, all the help, spiritual as well as temporal, that was possible, and that he was a living example of virtue and holiness to all the other Ecclesiastics, and when all has been said that can be said of our Blessed Founder's exercise of the cardinal virtue of justice, it falls far short of what we ourselves have seen of it and what we think of it: and every word of this is true and authenticated.

§ 3. HIS FORTITUDE

As for our Blessed Founder's fortitude, it is well known that he had received that gift from God in a most eminent degree. The Bishop of Belley, speaking on this subject, said: "He had shoulders strong enough to bear the whole world upon them."

He showed this gift of fortitude by always fighting against his passions and overcoming them, and by keeping them constantly under the control of reason and of the most holy Will of God, aspiring ever to the union of his soul with God. He embraced generously all the labours which Divine Providence put in his way in the

course of his busy and devoted life; enduring patiently and with unwavering firmness all injuries and contradictions, as we shall see later on in the article which treats of his patience.

He was never known to act contrary to the dictates of his conscience in any single matter, whether urged to do so by promises or threats. So firm was he in all that reason and the Will of God demanded, that nothing could shake him.

I have been told that the members of the Senate of Chambéry asked him, as ecclesiastical judge, to issue a letter commanding those who were aware of certain facts to denounce them, but our Blessed Founder did not think fit to do so. The Senate was much annoyed at his refusal, and repeated the demand, threatening, if it was not granted, to reduce his income. This did not disturb him at all, but he exclaimed with great fortitude: "God be praised! This sentence will not injure me so much as people think; on the contrary, their wishing to deprive me of my temporal support is a sign that I must henceforth become wholly spiritual."

On one occasion, a nobleman of high rank threatened to break into this very Convent,* and drag from it a lady of title who had taken refuge here, unless indeed she was delivered into his hands. Our Blessed Founder, without being the least moved by these threats, after having listened for some time to the messenger, replied firmly

* Of the Visitation at Annecy [*Tr.*].

and calmly: "It will not be done, he will not do it," and in truth it never was attempted.

When the dignity of our Blessed Founder was in question, and any one attacked it, his fortitude was his defence, and he always maintained his dignity without ever giving way in anything.

He used often to say that calm and storm were equally indifferent to him, and once he wrote to me thus: "I am expecting a great tempest to burst over me, but I await it joyously; and looking to the Providence of God, I hope that this will conduce to His greater glory, and the more perfect repose of my soul. Since, then, my expectations bring me so much consolation and such hopes of happiness, why should I not tell you so? Oh! thrice blessed are they who do not rely for support on anything in a life so deceitful and uncertain as this is, and who look upon it only as a plank by which they may pass to the heavenly life! There only should our hopes and our aspirations dwell."

Speaking of some persecution he said: "We are not in any way a dishonour to the Church, when we are imitating Our Saviour, Who suffered so many ignominies for our salvation."

Again, he said: "We must despise all that is not God, for the sake of God." Ah! how full was his heart of zeal for the glory of God!

He used to say that the glory of the love of God consisted in burning and consuming all that was not Himself, so as to reduce and change all into Him. "Nothing," he would say, "closes my

eyes to what relates to the service of God, and I hate worldly prudence and political wisdom to be brought to bear on these matters." "We must live," he said on another occasion, "a life of toil and hardship, since we are the children of Our Saviour's laborious life, and painful death." And truly, in the midst of storms and tempests, our Blessed Founder remained unshaken, calm, and at peace.

His fortitude was also shown in his reformation of many Monasteries, which were most fruitful afterwards in their renewed life, as is well known in all the country round about.

He displayed it again in an extraordinary manner by settling the reverend Barnabite Fathers in two parts of his diocese, in this town and at Thonon, an enterprise of great difficulty; and still more by the institution of our own Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, which he undertook solely on the inspiration of Divine Providence, without having any pecuniary assistance whatever. This is why he said that God made it out of nothing, as He made the world. This new Institution brought down upon him much censure, contradiction, and contempt. It was openly declared to be a folly, and many persons of high standing asserted this, some even telling him to his face that it was so.

He used to say that, where it was a question of reaping good for souls, we must not fear blame, and if this Community succeeded in preventing the commission of one mortal sin, and did no

more, he would be satisfied. He wrote to me once, before the establishment of this Community had been effected, that from the point of view of worldly prudence, he foresaw impossibilities in the execution of this design committed to him by God; that there seemed to be no opening whatever for it; but that nevertheless he felt certain that God would bring it to pass, and that therefore he was quite untroubled and happy about the matter; a confidence which, as we all know, was fully justified, since He crowned the undertaking with perfect success, making all redound to His glory, and by means which Providence alone could supply.

During a long course of years he suffered from an active form of contradiction which was especially harassing. This is how he wrote about it; I have seen and read the letter in his own handwriting: "Great pressure is put upon me, and I seem powerless to resist it; indeed, if I were exposed to more, I feel as if I should sink under it; but the more sensible I am of my own weakness, the stronger is my confidence in God; and I feel certain that should I be brought face to face with these difficulties I should find myself clothed with the fortitude and grace of God, and should make a speedy end of my enemies."

I was told, and many people know, that when our Blessed Founder was preaching in Paris in the year 1602, some who envied the honour which was universally paid him, informed the King that he had a secret understanding with

M. de Biron. This was told to our Blessed Founder, just as he was on his way to preach to a very distinguished audience. Quite unmoved by the news, he went up into the pulpit, and delivered his sermon with perfect calmness. As he was leaving the Church, one of his friends, knowing what he had been told, and admiring his fortitude, said to him: "What! do not these tidings astonish you more than that?" Our Blessed Founder replied: "If what the King was told about me were true, my crime would indeed have overwhelmed me, and I should have thought more about hiding myself than about preaching; but as there is no truth whatever in the accusation, I considered that God would have as much care for my innocence, as I have for His glory." He then presented himself to the King, who from the open expression of his countenance at once recognised the innocence of his heart, and henceforth loved and respected him greatly.

After the Chablais had been converted to the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith, the Council of the Duke of Savoy persuaded him for political reasons to leave three heretical Ministers in the Chablais. Our Blessed Founder opposed this arrangement for several excellent reasons, but finding that the Council was prevailing, full of fortitude he turned to the Prince and said: "What, your Highness, leave Ministers in this place! Why, that would be to lose, not your estates only, but heaven also, one foot's breadth of which is worth more than all the world to-

gether; there is no covenant between Jesus Christ and Belial." To this remonstrance his Highness replied: "Let them go, then," and they were accordingly dismissed.

I have always noticed how resolute and strong our Blessed Founder showed himself in bearing heavy burdens and labours, and in carrying out those enterprises which God inspired him to undertake; for he never abandoned any such, unless he was convinced that it was the good pleasure of God that he should do so. He used to say that when Our Lord committed any business into our hands we must never abandon it, but be courageous in surmounting and conquering all the difficulties which we might meet with in the way.

He combined with this stout-heartedness in undertaking and carrying out projects, a sweet and pliable readiness to acquiesce in all that happened by God's ordinance. Truly, it shows great fortitude to persevere as our Blessed Founder did in the practice of all the virtues; for he was never known to turn aside for a moment from the right path, or to lose one grain of his patience and modesty, amid all the innumerable afflictions and contradictions which beset him. This is a well known fact.

§ 4. HIS TEMPERANCE

As regards the temperance of our Blessed Founder, it is well known that he was extremely abste-

mious and sober in both eating and drinking; and that he kept a most frugal table—such, he said, as the Sacred Council prescribed for Bishops.

His food was of the coarsest kind; when delicacies were served up to him, as was only done when he was entertaining guests at his table, he accepted them, and then usually, a little later, quietly handed them to those who were near him, or else left them on his plate to be sent to some sick people who often, out of devotion to him, begged for his leavings. When these delicacies were pressed upon him, and his friends were even angry because he would only eat coarse food, he would answer gently that he had a rustic appetite, and that coarse food suited him best; and yet it was well known that his constitution was a delicate one. The real truth was, as he once owned, that he loved the food of the poor.

For a long time he was in the habit of taking only one meal a day, partly from abstemiousness and partly, I believe, in order to gain more time for work, and for doing what he was prevented from doing by his unwearied attention to the crowds of people who flocked to him from all parts.

He fasted strictly every Lent, and at all times when the Church commanded fasting. Also for many years he fasted on Fridays and on the vigils of the Feasts of Our Lady, and I believe only gave up these latter fasts for the sake of his household. I know also that he often in the evenings practised abstinence.

His spirit of mortification was, however, most absolutely shown by his total indifference to food, by his never complaining of anything that was wrong about it, and by his taking things just as they came.

I have seen with my own eyes how little, if any, attention he paid to what he was eating. On one occasion at his Mother's table a dish of poached eggs was placed before him, but it was observed that he was not touching the eggs themselves, but only dipping his bread in the liquor in which they were served.

At another time he happened to have some fresh butter, the pats put into water on account of the heat of the weather, before him on the table. For a long time he did not touch the butter, but, as in the case of the poached eggs, only dipped his bread into the water.

He used to teach our Order that we ought to pay great respect to those sacred words which Our Lord addressed to His disciples: "Eat such things as are set before you." * He said that the true fulfilment of this teaching consisted in eating with indifference whatever was put before us, without any choice; and that this mode of eating was the best because it made no display of that austerity which the world esteems so highly, and that yet it was, all the same, no small act of austerity thus to turn our tastes from one side to another and to deny our appetites what they desired. He was in the habit of diluting most

* Luke x. 8.

copiously any wine which he drank, and he only took it in cases of real necessity.

He himself used to say the grace before and after meals for the clergy. At his table he always had the Holy Scriptures or pious books, especially the Lives of the Saints, read aloud, until they were about half-way through the meal, when they wound up with sensible and very often serious conversation, in which, as we are told by those who were present, our Blessed Founder became sometimes so much absorbed, that he forgot to eat or drink, or if he ate, did so quite mechanically. When persons of high rank were at his table, he had no reading aloud, but the conversation was then always most edifying.

As regards other mortifications I know, from a person in whom he placed the greatest confidence, that our Blessed Founder often took the discipline, and rose in the middle of the night to do so, that no one might hear him; and that he often increased the severity of this penance that he might obtain from Our Lord, for some soul in his charge, the grace of final perseverance.

He scarcely ever warmed himself at the fire, but endured the extremes of cold and heat without complaining. During the last winter of his life, I have heard his servants say, that he would have none of the good clothes of which he stood in need, and was very insufficiently clad through that exceptionally bitter and inclement season. It was then that, in obedience to the summons of the Cardinal of Savoy, he set out for Avignon, on

board a Rhone boat. The north wind blew keenly over the water, but he would not put on his cloak, however much he was urged to do so, and one of his chaplains who saw this told me that he did not know what to think of it, and could only imagine that this Blessed Father wished to inflict suffering on his body. He did suffer exceedingly during this journey, being, as he was, already overwhelmed with the pain and weakness of a mortal disease. In short, he mortified himself in every possible way, according to the opportunities which offered themselves for so doing, but in so secret and careful a manner that it was difficult, except for those who watched him very closely, to discover it.

He used to say that even trifling sufferings gave opportunities for the most useful mortifications; and for this reason he bore most patiently with the stings of flies, great and small, which would settle on his head, and even draw blood. He endured all kinds of bodily discomforts without a complaint, and without showing the slightest repugnance to them, receiving all from the hand of God.

The same day, July 29th, she continued her deposition on the twenty-eighth point as follows:

With regard to this same temperance of our Blessed Founder I repeat that he always avoided any outward display of mortification, except as

far as it was commanded by the Church. He manifested no kind of singularity in any one of his actions, but took care to lead an ordinary life, unmarked by any of those things which the world esteems so highly. All the beauty of this holy soul was within, consisting in the perfection of all the virtues with which God had divinely endowed it, and whose lustre shone forth in every ordinary daily action, which he performed as well as it was possible for it to be performed, and indeed in an extraordinary manner.

To conclude this subject, he preferred the mortifications which presented themselves, however small they might be, to the great ones which were self-chosen, saying: *Where there is less of our own choice, there is more of God.* Thus he never passed an hour without practising interior mortification, making use of every opportunity which occurred for so doing—constant diversion from his most important undertakings, and the contradictions, opposition, and continual vexations which met him at every turn; taking them all calmly, without a word of complaint, because he saw in them all the workings of Divine Providence, to whose guidance he had absolutely abandoned himself. This I know, this I believe, this is true, and the world knows it to be so.

TWENTY-NINTH POINT

HIS CHASTITY

Her answer on the twenty-ninth point was:

The purity and chastity of our Blessed Founder is a fact which I have never either heard or seen called in question. Many credible persons have assured me that the late M. de Sainte-Catherine, Canon and Penitentiary of Saint-Pierre in Geneva, a man distinguished by his virtue and piety, who had very often heard our Blessed Founder's confession, declared when at the point of death, that his saintly penitent was truly endowed with the angelic virtue of chastity and holiness, saying to his brother, a monk, and Prior of Talloire: "I do not wish to carry away with me into the next world this truth, but rather desire that every one should know that the Bishop of Geneva is a faithful servant of God, a holy and virgin soul."

Many have asserted this same fact, and our Blessed Founder himself confirmed it, and even spoke of it to me very simply. I believe that this was one of the things which he advised me not to mention during his lifetime.

This was not, however, an untried virtue, for it is said, and generally known, that it was often rudely tempted and assailed by various persons. His servants, however, and those who had the closest intercourse with our Blessed Founder, have assured me, that neither in word nor

behaviour, nor in any one of his actions, did he ever give the slightest sign of a thought that was contrary to this virtue.

In his countenance, in his carriage, in all his words and deeds, he bore the image of true purity, innocence, and modesty; wherever he was, whatever he did, it was the same. He said that he never studied any one's face to find out whether he or she was handsome or ugly, and when they had gone away he could not have told you the least what they were like. I heard him say that, I think, before I became a nun.

I have seen our Blessed Founder again and again in all sorts of company, and performing all sorts of actions, without ever detecting in him the faintest irregularity: on the contrary, I have always admired his equability of temper, his gravity tempered with affability towards all the variety of persons with whom he came in contact, however familiar and special friends they might be; and this gravity was joined to a modesty, so rare and so humble, that it was impossible for any one who approached him to treat him with anything but respect.

He received women of all ranks at his house, conversing with them, as with every one else, with the greatest kindness, but without the slightest familiarity of word or behaviour. Generally speaking, they only sought his presence in order to consult him on matters of conscience; but while they were with him, he always kept

his door open. One of his chaplains or of his attendants was, as a rule, with him during these interviews, and he used to say that a Bishop ought always to be accompanied by some Priest, who should be a witness of his actions and, if necessary, give an account of them.

To sum up the matter, this Prelate lived a life so distinguished by its wisdom, purity, and sanctity, that all acknowledged him to be a man of stainless chastity and innocence. And this is true, noteworthy, and public.

THIRTIETH POINT

HIS HUMILITY

Her answer on the thirtieth point was:

I affirm that I have always believed and known from the words and actions of our Blessed Founder that he was perfectly humble. Not that he posed, or that he used words of self-depreciation—unless it was on rare occasions, when he spoke from his heart—for he was wont to speak but little of himself and of his own concerns. Indeed he used to say that we ought not to speak either good or evil of ourselves, for that self-praise and self-blame both had equally their root in vanity.

He very seldom made known any of his virtues, unless to his nearest and most confidential friends. Neither did he publish abroad

his imperfections, although he was always ready to own them most frankly and candidly. He sometimes said that if he had not been afraid of giving scandal, he would have spoken of them very freely.

Sometimes he talked about the defects of his past life in order not only to humble himself, but also to help and console those to whom he was speaking. He also would frequently exalt the work and abilities of some other Prelate, by depreciating his own.

His humility was hearty, noble, real, and solid, making him totally indifferent to either esteem or contempt. He had a very poor opinion of himself, loved to be despised and humiliated,* and thought highly of such practices. He told me once that he had been labouring for three whole years to acquire this virtue of humility, and that he loved and valued it above all others.

When he was treated with contempt he never showed the slightest irritation. In a letter written with his own hand and seen and read by me, he expresses himself thus: "Would to God that I were as insensible to all other things, as I am to blame and contempt." Our Blessed Founder never boasted or set himself up above others. Only, he showed a proper regard for his own dignity, so as to retain the respect due to it for the edification of his neighbour.

He was marvellously dexterous in hiding the store of virtues which he possessed, so as not to

* *Il aimait le mépris et sa propre abjection.*

attract the admiring notice of others. Some one having told him on one occasion that the Parisians held him in such high esteem that they watched for him as though he were a Saint, he replied in a tone of the profoundest resignation: "I have nothing corresponding to such high esteem." When he was speaking on some doctrine of great importance he allowed his words to come forth one after another, almost timidly.

When people paid him honour and showed their high opinion of his holiness, the kind and genial Prelate received their homage with the most unaffected and simple cheerfulness, saying pleasantly that he must not refuse to accept the honours they were so good as to pay him, at the same time showing plainly that he condescended thus in order to satisfy them, and to do honour, so to speak, to the honours they were rendering to him. He said also that it was best not to undertake any great matter until one had been for a long time dead to oneself and buried to the world, and that one would then be, as it were, dragged forth and brought to light by force—by the power, that is, of the Sun of justice, which raises from the dust and makes manifest hidden things.

The late M. Louis de Sales, Provost of his Cathedral Church, who knew him very intimately, told me that our Blessed Founder was especially careful in concealing his good deeds, and did so with such admirable skill that his intention was very seldom divined by those about him.

In his carriage and gestures there was a wonderful dignity, blended, however, with such a deep humility, that no one feared to approach him. The poor, even the very peasants, accosted him with perfect confidence; he was glad to be with them, heard them tell him all their small affairs, and often even spoke in their dialect so as to make himself more at home with them; he despised none, however lowly they might be. He treated all persons with the honour which suited their respective ranks, and spoke of them in the same way. He imposed this behaviour as a rule upon our Order. He used to say that there was not a man living who cared less about honours than he did, or, on the other hand, who liked better to pay them.

He received the smallest services rendered to him with such hearty affection, that you would have thought none were due to him. Once he asked some one if she prayed to God for him, and as she hesitated before answering, thinking that he really had no need of prayers, he added with great feeling: "Pray for me, that I may not be lost."

Our Blessed Founder was never in a hurry to give his advice, or to support his own opinions; he would always rather put forward those of others than his own, unless in matters in which the service of God was concerned, or the good of his neighbour, for there he was firm, without, however, despising the opinions of others, or anything that they said; on the contrary, he always

gave his approval as far as was possible. To this line of conduct he adhered steadily on all occasions, as is well known. He was so anxious for the perfection of his neighbour, and so much afraid of putting him to the blush, that I really do not believe any one was ever put to confusion by any act of his.

He made up his mind to submit his judgment and his will to those of others; saying it was far easier to fall in with the wish of all, than to make a single person agree with one's own wish.

He had a great wish to restrict our Order to the simple title of a Congregation, and on this subject the illustrious Cardinal Bellarmin was of his opinion; but the late Archbishop of Lyons * urged him so strongly in the matter that our Blessed Founder consented, in deference to him, to place us under the rule of St. Augustine, writing to His Eminence in these words: "I repress my desires, submitting to the decrees of God's Providence. I am silent, and acquiesce in your judgment and counsel."

He used to say that we ought to wish every one to succeed better than ourselves in their active undertakings, such as preaching, speaking, writing well, and so on. "For," he said, "humility ought to destroy in us all that is not necessary for our advancement in grace."

Once, when he returned from preaching before a large and distinguished congregation, I asked him if he was satisfied with his sermon. "No,"

* The Cardinal de Marquemont [*Tr.*].

he said, "but what does it matter!" without the least concern for what people might think.

He did not wish to appear humble, but only a man far less deserving of esteem than people thought him to be; for he knew perfectly well in what high consideration he was held. He told me one day in a letter, which was in answer to one I had sent him, that after having read what I had written, he walked up and down his room several times with tears in his eyes, thinking what he really was in comparison with what people imagined him to be, saying that "we ought never to esteem ourselves better in the sight of men, than we are in the sight of God."

He could not endure praise, especially when given to him publicly. A worthy Prelate, a great pillar of the Church, once praised him openly from the pulpit and in his very presence, overwhelming him with confusion, so that he could scarcely raise his eyes from the ground, and seemed on the point of fainting. It is said that he afterwards addressed a serious remonstrance to the Prelate.

Our Blessed Founder never disdained to raise his hat with the greatest affability to the most insignificant people, to the peasants, and even to his own servants, often at the same time speaking kindly words to them suitable to their circumstances.

He used to say that "we ought to be absolutely faithful in practising even the smallest virtues, neglecting none: and that it was better to be

great in the sight of God in the exercise of these, than small in His sight with virtues which appeared great in the eyes of the world."

He has told me that if it had not been for fear of vexing the servants, he would have waited on himself. So dearly did he love this precious virtue of humility, practising it on all possible occasions, in his dress, his furniture, and all details of daily life.

Here, at Annecy, he was lodged in a house containing large rooms, spacious halls, and long galleries. On his first arrival he had his bed placed in a very small dressing-room, "in order," he said to me, "that after having walked about all the day like a Prelate in these great halls and galleries, I may at night find myself lodged like the poor little man I really am."

This virtue of humility was recommended by our Blessed Founder to all his penitents, and especially to us Nuns of the Visitation. One day, when he had come to our Convent at Lyons to hear the confession of a sick sister, paper and ink were put ready for him on a table, and he was entreated to write down what he most desired of us. He did so, writing very carefully at the top of the page HUMILITY and nothing else, thus showing us plainly how highly he esteemed that virtue.

His servants have told me that when he was passing through the town, and they wanted to clear the way for him, especially of heavily loaded carts or carriages, he forbade them, saying: "Are they

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not men just as much as we are," and would at the same time take the most inconvenient part of the street.

He also showed his humility when travelling in country parts by always choosing the poorest and smallest spots for his lodging, saying that "he was never more comfortable than when he was uncomfortable." In his last journey to Lyons, he preferred the gardener's cottage belonging to our House of the Visitation (taking up his abode in the Confessor's bedroom) to all the other more comfortable quarters which were offered to him either by Monks or secular Priests, and this as much from his love of poverty as from his fear of inconveniencing any one.

He used to say that "we must hide our own littleness in God's infinite greatness, and remain there hidden like a chicken under its mother's wings;" and that "blessed were the humble and poor in spirit, for they went on their way confidently and reached the haven happily."

"Let us," he said, "leave the heights of these dazzling virtues to lofty souls; we do not deserve so high a rank in the service of God."

Our Blessed Founder was never known to apply for any dignity for himself, or for any permission to preach in the famous pulpits of great towns; on the contrary, he often refused these honours when offered to him. His only ambition, he said, was to spend his life usefully in the service of God.

On one occasion he told his brother and

successor as Bishop of Geneva,* and he told me the same, that he would not take three steps to obtain a Cardinal's hat. I have seen a letter written by his own hand in which he expresses himself thus: "News has come to me from two quarters, from Rome and from Paris, that they are wanting to set me on a higher pinnacle in the eyes of the world. My answer is before God. No, never imagine that I would lift a finger to gain the whole world; I despise it too heartily. If this is not for the greater glory of God, it is nothing and less than nothing to me."

On the 30th of the same month of July, at seven o'clock in the morning, she continued her deposition as follows:

Continuing my evidence on the point dealt with before, I may tell you that on one occasion, when certain preferments had been offered to our Blessed Founder, he wrote as follows: "I feel, and it is a great joy to me to feel, that my soul not only has no desire to think of these honours, but even holds them in as small regard as she would do at the moment of death, when the whole world appears as nothing but smoke!" One day he was asked which of the eight beatitudes was his favourite. He replied: *Blessed are those who suffer for justice' sake.* "I would rather," he added, "that at the day of the last judgment, when all things shall be revealed, my

* John Francis de Sales [*Tr.*].

justice, if any is to be found in me, should be hidden from all the world, and seen only by God." Such was the true humility of heart and mind of our Blessed Father.

Even in practising the virtues, he chose indeed the best, but not the most apparent and highly esteemed. He preferred humility, gentleness, cordial benevolence towards his neighbour, yielding to the inclinations of others, modesty, simplicity, and similar little virtues which, as he used to say, "spring up at the foot of the Cross, unseen by men, yet which mortify and sanctify the heart"—he preferred them, I say, to extraordinary fasting, hair shirts, disciplines, and other mortifications of an external nature, such as attract wonder and admiration, and are thought so much of by the world. His delight was to be hidden from all save God.

A friend wrote to him one day in the highest terms of praise, as regards the benefit derived from his conversation. He received this reply from our Blessed Founder: "I should indeed like to have you here with me that I might open your eyes to my inferiority, which is really so extreme, that I am nothing but a phantom and a shadow of an ecclesiastic, with no experience to guide me in my speaking and writing except what I borrow from others."

On another occasion a Monk wrote to our Blessed Founder in most laudatory terms. To those who brought the letter he said: "This good Father declares that I am a flower, a vase

of flowers, and a phœnix; but the real truth is that I am nothing but a most loathsome man, a carrion crow, a mere dung-heap; I am the most absolute nothing of all nothings, the concentration of every human misery; I am grieved that this good Father does not occupy his mind with some better subject."

Now all these things were said by our Blessed Founder truthfully, according to his belief, and in conclusion, I declare in all truth and sincerity that I have never observed in any one of his words or actions, the slightest shadow of a design to exalt himself in the eyes of the world; on the contrary, I have noticed that on all occasions he practised this virtue of humility as much as it was possible for him to do. And this is true and well known.

THIRTY-FIRST POINT

HIS PATIENCE

Her answer on the thirty-first point was:

It is well known that our Blessed Founder was endowed with patience of an extraordinary kind. The Superior of the Abbey *d'Abondance* (a man famous for his integrity and rare piety, shown as much by his putting his abbey into the hands of the Feuillant Fathers, as by his becoming himself one of their Order), this good Abbé, I say, calls the patience of our Blessed Founder *immovable* and *invincible.*

In him this virtue was absolutely boundless; for there was no kind of suffering, whether it seemed to come directly from the hand of God or only to come upon him by the Divine permission, which it did not enable him to bear. I have seen him in the midst of the most poignant distresses and anxieties, sometimes occasioned by the persecutions which fell upon his brothers or his other relations and on his fellow-citizens, still preserving the same unruffled patience. Once, when some trouble of this kind had reached its climax, I asked him if he had not felt grieved to the heart. He answered: "I was never more at peace."

It was always the same, in all his afflictions, in the loss of those he loved and in his own sicknesses. In short, whatever happened, he was always seen to be completely master of himself: neither sorrows, nor losses, nor the malice of men ever disturbed him; his heart was always serene and patient, free from all kinds of malice and revenge, as many know by experience.

Our Blessed Founder was also very patient under injuries, contempt and blame, to which, indeed, as I have said above, he was almost insensible. These things did come upon him at different times, not because any one bore him ill-will, for he never gave occasion for that, and never did an unkindness to any human being, but because he could not give satisfaction to those who asked him to do what was wrong.

He used to say that the time of contradictions and afflictions was a good harvest time; that

during this season we ought to gather in the blessings of contradictions; that we gain more profit during one day of this season than during ten of any other; that God will speak for those who are silent, will triumph for those who endure, and will crown patience with success. He wrote once as follows: "Do not grieve this poor heart, but rather, gently help it to advance more and more towards a holy resignation. One ounce of this virtue acquired amid contradictions, reproaches, sarcasms, censures, and reprimands, is worth more than ten pounds gained in any other way. Ah! how happy we are to have sworn an eternal fidelity to our dear Master! Patient perseverance in living a virtuous life will not be enough, for we shall also meet with plenty of opportunities for practising patience."

I have been told on good authority that a certain gentleman, having failed in his attempt to obtain from our Blessed Founder a benefice for an unworthy and ignorant Priest, in whom he was interested, flew into such a passion, that he heaped upon the holy Bishop's head every kind of threatening and outrageous insult, but he only returned words of gentleness for every injurious epithet, and quietly explained his reason for not being able to grant the request.

On another occasion he came into our parlour, and the Superior happening just to have heard of some indignity which had been done to him, and which he had borne with perfect patience, he said to her: "If any one had torn out my

eyes, and afterwards I were able to see that person, I should look upon him with just as much love and gentleness as if he had never done me any harm."

He bore with incredible patience an attack made upon him about a young man of high rank, who had been placed under his care. This was really the severest and most painful persecution he ever had to endure, yet he bore it with the utmost patience and without any sort of recrimination. I know indeed, as a fact, that he actually conferred benefits on those who had injured him the most in this matter, giving them all kinds of help; and before I became a Nun, I had opportunities of hearing him converse with them in the kindest and most courteous manner possible, and this very soon after they had treated him in so injurious a way.

Some Monks, men of little regularity, vexed and opposed him in a matter which he had very much at heart, even proceeding to violence and to outrages which would have been unbearable to any but to him, and that in his very presence, for which, indeed, he rebuked them firmly, but yet with his accustomed gentleness. A few days afterwards, the Superior of these same Monks came to our Blessed Founder to ask him to do their Order some great kindness, which he most cheerfully consented to do. One of his friends, who happened to know all that had occurred, expressing great astonishment, he replied: "Oh! if that Father had asked me for one of my arms, I would have given it to him."

A public affront was offered to him by a Monk of a reformed Order, who in a sermon and in the very pulpit and the throne of truth, declaimed with furious invective against his book *Philothea*,* which has, as we know, been so well received by all classes of people throughout the world. He rudely scoffed at and sharply reproved our Blessed Founder for teaching the practice of devotion to souls living in the world, in the household, and the courts of princes, for giving them rules to be observed at balls and entertainments, so as to avoid offending God amid scenes and doings of so great danger. Our Blessed Founder, having all these animadversions reported to him, said: "If he would have been pleased to remember that I was giving careful warning of the dangers which beset people in such circumstances, and that I am following, in giving these warnings and this counsel, the example of the holiest and most learned theologians, even that of St. Louis, who is surely worthy of imitation in the art of guiding courtiers to a devout life; if, I say, all this had been considered, I think that their charity and discretion would never have permitted their zeal, rigorous and austere as it is, to rise up in arms against me."

A short time before the death of our Blessed Founder, I was witness to a scene in which an ordinary Priest, being subjected to some inconvenience, and wanting in proper self-restraint, broke out into passionate invectives and reproaches

* The *Introduction to a Devout Life.*

against him. Our Blessed Founder bore this with perfect patience, and without saying anything except a few gentle words to soothe him.

I heard from a person of undoubted veracity that he was told by a man living at Annecy, who most foolishly believed that our Blessed Founder had done him some injury, that this man had spoken unfavourably of him rather freely in public, and that after a while the holy Bishop happening to meet him, accosted him, speaking with his usual gentleness: "Well," he said, "I am quite aware that you bear me a grudge; do not excuse yourself; but I assure you that if you had plucked out one of my eyes, I would look at you kindly with the other."

On another occasion, one of the clergy, not having succeeded in obtaining a benefice for which he had no right to ask, being totally unfit for the charge, actually dared to publish a libel against the honour of our Blessed Founder, of his relations, and some of his household, presenting it to him when he was seated on his episcopal throne in the Cathedral Church. The Bishop took it and when he had returned to his palace, read it quietly and with calm indifference, neither would he permit his Chapter, the members of which were eager to punish such insolence, to follow up the matter in any way. More than this, later on, he actually conferred benefits on his calumniator, lavished kindness upon him, and even paid him honour which was not his due. Thus we see that his maxim was

to bear with his neighbour to the very utmost, and he taught his penitents to do the same, saying that if even we were to lose something by it, God would make us an ample recompense, adding that when we are forced to make known the faults of another for the sake of justice, we must keep strictly to what is absolutely demanded by the case in hand. Our Blessed Founder said on another occasion: "Men must have patience with one another, and the bravest are those who put up the best with the imperfections of their fellows."

The holy Bishop never displayed any resentment or spirit of revenge, whatever injuries were inflicted on him; on the contrary, he endured all and excused all with incredible kindness, trying to win back the hearts of those who without just cause were irritated against him.

This was especially the case with regard to a man in Paris who, from being an heretical Minister, had been converted to the Catholic Faith, and then actually dared to argue impertinently with our Blessed Founder, putting every sort of arrogant and audacious question to him; yet receiving such gentle and reasonable replies, that the man afterwards declared they had saved him from his intention of falling back into heresy. Added to this, the holy Bishop overwhelmed him with kindness, and when he was reduced to extreme poverty, both he and his family found their safest shelter under his protection.

On one occasion he was most unreasonably persecuted and censured for having given, while in Paris, some advice in accordance with the commands of the Council of Trent, closely concerning the salvation of the souls of the persons whom he was advising. When the holy Bishop was told of this calumny, he wrote as follows: "As for me I say that I must practise the teaching of St. Paul: *Not revenging yourselves, my dearly beloved; but give place unto wrath* (Rom. xii. 19).* After all, Divine Providence knows exactly what degree of reputation I must have, in order to discharge rightly the duties which I am called upon to perform, and I desire neither more nor less than what Divine Providence wishes me to have."

Again, on the same subject he writes: "The blame which I have incurred in this matter troubles me very little, for I know that before God I am guiltless; but still, I am grieved that so many bad passions should be stirred up in an affair which excites so few, if any, in my own breast. Truly those who are well acquainted with me know that I seldom, if ever, enter with passion or violence upon any undertaking, and that when I commit errors, it is through ignorance. I should indeed be very glad if I could regain the good opinion of these gentlemen, for the sake of my ministry. If that cannot be, I shall still go on

* "Non vos metipsos defendentes carissimi, sed date locum ira. Scriptum est enim: Mihi vindicta, ego retribuam, dicit Dominus" (Rom. xii. 19).

discharging its duties *by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true* (2 Cor. vi. 8). In short, I desire neither life nor reputation except in such a measure as God wills, and I am certain to have much more than I deserve." All this I have seen written by the hand of our Blessed Founder, and have read it.

It would be impossible and tedious for others were I to relate here all that our Blessed Founder suffered in the way of opposition and injustice. Sometimes he was blamed for his great strictness in his treatment of Priests who had deserved correction, sometimes for his dealings with rebellious Monks, sometimes again he was severely censured by people who simply set themselves in judgment against him, with no better cause of complaint than that he devoted himself too absolutely to the service of his neighbour. His very servants waged war against him on this account, so that he was often hindered from doing the kindnesses which he wished to do, or did them in spite of vexatious opposition. Yet he endured all these things with extraordinary patience, as I well know, and have also been assured by one who was a daily witness of his actions during many long years, and whose veracity is unimpeachable.

As for our Blessed Founder's patience in sickness, it was incredible. He had two very severe, long, and painful illnesses, before he was consecrated Bishop, and from that time, as his labours were redoubled, his physical infirmities increased.

During the first years after his consecration he suffered from continual attacks of fever.

Some years later, he went to the bailiwick of Gex, a part of his diocese, to re-establish the Catholic Faith in some parishes. There he laboured so continuously, in spite of the intense heat of the weather just then, that he brought on a fever, through which he worked on for several days, until he had completed all that he had undertaken, when he at last returned home, and succumbed to a serious illness, which lasted for some time.

He was also long and dangerously ill in Paris, the last time he visited it, breaking down under the weight of much preaching, of officiating pontifically, giving conferences, holding disputes with heretics, hearing confessions, and other pious works.

He was also seriously ill at Turin, when he went there for the last time. This illness was brought on by excessive toil; confirming an immense number of people in one city of Piedmont, and also by the severe vigils which he was constrained to keep, notwithstanding the weak state of his health, in order to satisfy the desires and demands of the Reverend Feuillant Fathers, to which he was obliged to respond, having presided at their General Chapter, as well as to satisfy also the devotion of many souls who wished to consult him and to confess to him. In short, it is impossible to tell all that our Blessed Founder suffered during his sojourn in that place, both from the intense heat of the weather and from the incon-

venience and unhealthiness of his lodging, refusing, as he always did, to go to the one prepared for him by the Most Serene Princess of Piedmont. Thus, bowed down with sickness, he took his homeward journey across the mountains, his strength so utterly exhausted by violent internal hemorrhage that his servants feared he would die before he reached home. God only knows what he suffered in this journey of three months' duration, yet without a murmur, neither complaining of his illness nor of the inconveniences of the transit. I forgot to say that on his way to Piedmont, he was seized with such terrible cramp and spasms that he was often constrained to stop the men who carried him, till the agony was past.

All through the nineteen years during which I had the great honour of his acquaintance, I knew, both from hearsay and from my own personal observation, that he suffered from all sorts of maladies; from attacks of fever, quinsy, and catarrh, and from internal abdominal weakness which greatly exhausted him, accompanied as it was for many years with severe hemorrhage.

All these ailments increased with his advancing years, and in addition to excruciating pains in the head and body, he suffered from weakness and even open wounds in the legs, making walking so difficult and so fatiguing that it was grievous to see him wearily struggling along. Yet, in spite of all these sufferings, and many more of which nothing was known, he made no

change whatever in his manner of life, and so controlled his countenance that he was only known to be ill by his change of colour, especially as he never took to his bed except when overtaken by very serious illness.

To my own knowledge, and as his servants assure us, no sign of impatience ever escaped him, however ill he might be. Gentle, calm, and sweet in manner and in voice, he bore his sickness, and took the medicines, nourishment, and attendance bestowed on him, without showing the least repugnance or irritation; indeed he thought but lightly of what he suffered, and loved his sickness for the love of Our Lord.

I know, from what he once told me in writing, that when he was taking bodily repose on his bed, his thoughts were more than ever busy with the consideration of eternal joys, and of the closer union of his soul with God. He said that we served God more perfectly by suffering than by acting, adding that Our Lord had, if we may so speak, saved us more by suffering than by being active. He was, however, unwilling that people should impose penances and austerities upon themselves which might bring on illnesses, "because," he said, "we owe that to the Providence of God and to the charity which is due to ourselves. If, however, sickness, or even the shortening of our life, should be brought on by much prayer and meditation, as piety and virtue may demand, we must bless God for this and endure it patiently. As we ought not to be

over-careful about the preservation of our health, which over-carefulness savours of effeminacy, so, on the other hand, we must not despise it altogether, such contempt savouring of pride and barbarism. We must compassionate Our Lord while our health is good, by serving Him faithfully, and suffer with Our Lord when He sends us pains and afflictions."

Directly our Blessed Founder had placed himself in the hands of the physicians he obeyed them absolutely, saying that Our Lord willed that it should be so. He never found fault with their prescriptions, but always took submissively what they ordered, although he sometimes knew that other remedies would have been better for him. He commanded our Order of the Visitation to observe this custom also. When asked what was the matter with him, he always answered frankly without any exaggeration, and said that these sicknesses were means sent to us by God to prepare us for greater sufferings and for death. Before he had taken to his bed, when remedies were pressed upon him, he said: "Since we must die, what do ten years more or less signify!" adding that nothing troubled him except the care which others took of him. All this is true, and a well-known fact.

THIRTY-SECOND POINT

HIS GENTLENESS

The same day, July 30, at three o'clock in the afternoon, she gave her answer to the thirty-second point:

The gentleness of our Blessed Founder was, as we all know, either by report or by our own personal experience, perfect. I do not think it is possible to convey to you any idea of the extraordinary kindliness and tenderness which God had shed into his soul. His eyes, his very features, his words, and all his actions breathed nothing but sweetness and gentleness; it radiated from him, and, as it were, overflowed into the hearts of those who saw him; he used to say that gentleness was the very essence of a Christian spirit.

He told me once that he had been striving diligently for three years to acquire this holy virtue, which made him condescending to all, and ready to give to his neighbour his person, his means, his affections, for each one to make use of according to his needs.

"I know no better remedy," he would say, "in the midst of contradictions, than not to speak about them, not to seem to notice them, and to treat the person who caused them with the greatest gentleness."

I know that he often received blame for very

holy actions, and I have myself seen him under such circumstances perfectly calm, without showing an atom of resentment, answering those who were finding fault with him with the utmost gentleness and cordiality.

For example, on one occasion a person came to him saying in a dry, cold manner that his delay in coming to the Divine Office was really an occasion of scandal to them all. He answered very gently: "These ladies are not to blame," alluding to those whose confessions he had just been hearing, and then went promptly and quietly to say the Office. In short, his gentleness was so admirable that it stimulated others to imitate it. Once, when he was reproached for being too gentle to certain people, he answered simply: "Is it not better to send them to purgatory by gentleness, than to hell by harshness?"

I have never heard that our Blessed Founder was seen to lose his temper. Once I entreated him to be a little roused by some opposition which was troubling our Convent of the Visitation. He answered: "Would you have me lose in a quarter of an hour the small stock of gentleness which I have been painfully amassing for the last twenty years?" It was, therefore, a common saying that he had actually no gall, and indeed, after his death the surgeons found none, but in its place numbers of little triangular-shaped stones, showing plainly the constraint and force which he had put upon himself to conquer the

passion of anger. Indeed he told me once, on an occasion of most justifiable wrath and indignation, that he was obliged to rein in his anger with both hands in order to stop it.

When he was reproved for the too great gentleness with which he treated some offending Priests, he answered: "Is it not better to convert them to repentance than to punish them, seeing that their offences do not deserve either the galleys or death?" adding that he would rather err by gentleness than by severity, since Our Lord hath told us to learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart.

Many great servants of God said, even during the life of our Blessed Founder, that they had never seen any more vivid representation of Our Lord conversing among men, than the life, discourse, and conduct of the holy Bishop, in all which he seemed to them truly an image of the Son of God.

A person, well worthy of belief, told me that a venerable Priest,* conversing with him once on the subject of our Blessed Founder's gentleness and condescension, told him how much he admired his excessive kindliness, and that, during a serious illness which he had in Paris, his greatest consolation was the consideration of the infinite kindness of God which was brought home to him by that of the holy Bishop of Geneva; "for," he said, "if a man can be so kind, how much more reason is there that Thou

* St. Vincent de Paul.

shouldst be good, and kind and gracious, oh my sweet Creator!"

With regard to a stinging letter which had been written on one occasion to our Blessed Founder, he said: "I should not dare to reply on a subject of this sort; I would rather pray to God that it may please Him to speak to the heart of this man and make him know His heavenly will." Could there be sweetness and kindness to compare with this? Indeed it is well known that God had showered *blessings of sweetness* upon our Blessed Founder.

I have seen him on all occasions unchanging in his marvellous gentleness, and lighting up the dullest and most serious affairs with his affable cordiality.

THIRTY-THIRD POINT

HIS DEVOTION, HIS PRAYER, AND HIS RECOLLECTION OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD

Her answer on the thirty-third point was:

I believe most firmly that the life of our Blessed Founder was, on account of the extreme purity of his intention in all that he did, one continual prayer. For, having been under his direction for nineteen years, and Almighty God having permitted me to have an intimate knowledge of him, and close communication with him, both by correspondence and by word of mouth, I

can most positively assert that in all his actions he had no other aim than the greater glory of God, and the fulfilment of His good pleasure. He used to say that the Divine Will was the sovereign law of his heart, and that in this life we must offer the prayer of work and action; that the best prayer we could possibly make was absolute acquiescence in the Will of Our Lord. This was another proof that his life was a continual prayer; for I can declare that in every step he took you could easily see that he was almost always recollected in God—although his recollection was not of a sad or gloomy kind; indeed it was not in any way apparent, except to those who knew his ways.

About fifteen years ago, I asked him if he ever, for long at a time, ceased to turn his thoughts to God; he replied: "Sometimes, for about a quarter of an hour." This answer, coming from a Prelate so occupied as he was with all kinds of varied and important business, filled me with admiration. He also taught his penitents to be constantly turning their thoughts back to God, even amidst such spiritual actions as preaching, hearing confessions, studying, reading, speaking of holy things, and the like.

Indeed, his sermons, conversations, and advice only tended to lead souls on the way towards a closer union of the mind with God, both by prayer and by action.

He told me once that he never felt embarrassed or constrained in the presence of kings

and princes, because the thought of a still greater and more majestic Presence was always with him, and kept him, wherever he might be, in the same mental attitude of reverence; and although he lived, generally speaking, surrounded by men and the pressure of business, yet he kept his heart, as far as possible, recollected in God. I will give you a proof of this. Writing to me on one occasion, he said: "I am surrounded by people, and yet my heart is solitary."

Besides all this, however, it is certain that our Blessed Founder had received from God a great gift of prayer, and that he conversed with Our Lord very simply and familiarly, with the most confiding love. Speaking to me once on this subject, he compared his prayer to oil, which, poured upon a highly-polished table, goes on spreading more and more over the surface; saying, that in the same way, from the few words or thoughts which he took for his meditation, there came forth a tender affection which pervaded his whole soul and steeped it in a surpassing sweetness.

He told me that the first thought which came to him on waking was of God, and that he fell asleep with the same thought, as far as he was able.

He also told me that it was a special joy to him to be quite alone, because of the all-pervading presence of God, of which he was then more keenly sensible than amid the tumult of business and conversation. I know that sometimes the

holy Bishop, beginning to pray without any preparation, felt himself suddenly rapt and wholly recollected in God.

He used to say that we did not know what was the true service of God; that the true way of serving Him was to follow Him and walk after Him in the highest point of the soul, without the support of consolation, or of feeling, or illumination other than that of bare and simple faith.*

It was not, however, that he did not receive, and that very often, great illuminations, both interior and even exterior, which showed how pleasing his manner of prayer was to God. He told me that once, when he was saying his rosary in the evening twilight, there appeared to him two pillars of fire, one large and the other small; that at first he felt a little fear, which, however, soon vanished, and that after a short time they faded away in the corner of his oratory, dying out in sparks. Monsieur de Thorens,† a man of rare piety and veracity, told me that once when he went to see our Blessed Founder he found him in his chamber quite agitated; seeing which, M. de Thorens pressed him very earnestly to tell him the reason, and after some hesitation, the holy Bishop told him that being at his prayers in this same oratory, which was really nothing but a simple prayer-desk with a Crucifix on it, a ball of fire had suddenly appeared to him and then vanished in sparks above his head.

* *Cf. supra*, p. 87.

† Count Louis de Sales bore this title at that time.

About five or six years before his death, speaking of prayer, he said that in it he felt no sensible emotion, for that all that God effected in him was brought about by a light which flashed through the highest region of his soul, and that the inferior portion had no part in it whatever.

Another time, speaking on this same subject, he told me that he had had good thoughts, but that it had been rather by way of the outpouring of his heart into eternity and the Eternal, than by discursive prayer.

He added that he did not trouble himself much whether prayer brought him consolation or desolation: that when Our Lord gave him good feelings he received them in simplicity; that when He gave him none, he did not think about the matter.

He has described in his book, the *Treatise on the Love of God*, so delicately and so clearly all the degrees of prayer and contemplation, that it is easy to judge how eminently rich he was in this gift of prayer, and indeed when we saw him in prayer, our hearts were filled with affection for the exercise: many people agree with me in saying this. He recommended its practice most earnestly to those who were under his direction. The year before he died, we saw clearly that his thoughts were so absolutely detached from things of earth that they could only rest in God.

He had indeed, as he told me, a great facility in prayer, and almost always received through it vivid illumination, and he had also sentiments of

most sacred union with God, before Whom he bowed down with the deepest reverence and confidence. He had several times told me in writing that I was to remind him to tell me what God had given to him in holy meditation. When I saw him, therefore, I asked him, but he answered: "Things so simple and so delicate that when they have passed away one can say nothing."

For some time before his death, he was scarcely able to give any time to this holy exercise, so overwhelmed was he by business and infirmities. One day I asked him if he had made his meditation. "No," he said, "but I have done what is as good." And this I can well believe, for, as may be seen from the preceding observations, his soul was always closely united to God, and he did all things for the sake of pure Divine love, and for no other consideration.

His ordinary Confessor, who for the space of about fifteen years never lost sight of him, said that he always believed that the holy Bishop had some secret understanding with Our Lord, for his inward guidance, and a special knowledge of such things as are hidden from other men. I believe this myself, and that he held a close and serious communion with God, for I never knew him to be attached to any special devotional exercise, nor indeed to anything whatever, neither have other people seen him to be so; and thus he preserved a holy freedom of mind which enabled him to do any and everything according to what Divine Providence offered him. When the time

had come for him to say Holy Mass, or to make his meditation, or perform any other similar exercise, he has often been known to delay or omit the exercise altogether, if the service of his neighbour or some other lawful occasion demanded it.

Once, in our Convent Church at Lyons, he was vested and on his way to the altar when a very poor and lowly person stopped him, begging him to hear his confession; our Blessed Founder heard it instantly, and indeed this was a thing which he often did.

He was never seen to be troubled or in any way wearied, when business matters came unexpectedly one upon the top of the other, but always took them quietly as from the hand of God, not looking at them in the light of human reason. Indeed both his Confessor and I used to notice that he never seemed to regard things as they were in themselves, but as they were in Him Who sent them. Thus he was always praying, keeping his heart constantly open to the good pleasure of God, in which he acquiesced simply, without any distinction or exception whatever.

He used often to say that a soul wishing to serve God perfectly must attach itself to Him alone, desiring ardently and unceasingly to possess Him, but that as regards the means of attaining to such a condition, the soul must not attach itself to any particular method, but must go on its way quite freely, gaily, and serenely, wherever charity or obedience should happen to call it.

All these counsels he himself put continually into practice, as is well known to those who were most intimately connected with him.

It is also well known that our Blessed Founder recited the Offices in Church with most extraordinary attention, reverence, and devotion. He scarcely turned his eyes or his head, except where it was necessary, and always remained standing in an attitude of grave humility, never assuming a sitting posture, weak and weary though he often was from many illnesses; unless, indeed, when he officiated pontifically, and then he took his seat on his throne. He assisted at all feasts and vigils of great feasts at the Divine Office in his Cathedral and at Compline in Lent, with such devotion and modesty that one saw plainly how perfectly his attention was fixed upon God. At these times great light and wonderful thoughts of God were poured into his soul. He wrote to me once, that while celebrating a certain great feast, he had felt as though he were among the choirs of angels.

It is undoubted that he said Holy Mass every day, without failing, unless for some just impediment, such as sickness, or when he was in the country, where he had no Church in which to say it. When the holy Bishop was at the altar, it was easy to see how deep was his reverence in the presence of God. His eyes were modestly cast down; his face full of recollection, and so calm and sweet that those who looked at him attentively were touched and thrilled with de-

votion. Especially at the moment of Consecration and Communion the peaceful radiance of his countenance filled every heart with emotion. Indeed this Divine Sacrament was his true life and strength, and in this action he appeared like a man wholly absorbed in God. He said his Mass in a grave, gentle, even tone of voice, without the least hurry, however busy he might be. He told me, many years ago, that from the moment that he turned to the altar he had no distraction of any kind. I know that some people, having seen him communicate, were so much touched with devotion that they never afterwards forgot what they had seen.

It is well known that our Blessed Father had a most perfect devotion to Our Lady, and a tender love for her, accompanied by a true filial confidence in her. He called her, his Lady, his Queen, his Mistress. When he preached her praises, on her feast days, which he never failed to do, it was always with a peculiar fervour, ease, and joyousness. "You know," he once said to me in writing, "that our glorious Mistress always gives me special help when I speak of her Divine maternity. I entreat her, sweet Mother of God, to put her hand into the precious side of her Son, and to take from thence His choicest graces, that she may give them to us abundantly."

At another time he said to me: "I have been feeling most strongly, how great a blessing it is to be a child, though an unworthy one, of this glorious Mother. Let us undertake great things

under her patronage, for if we are ever so little dear to her, she will never leave us destitute of what we are struggling to attain." In all his necessities our holy Bishop had recourse to the most glorious Virgin, and advised the same to his penitents. He made pilgrimages in her honour to the Chapel of Loretto, to our Lady of Compassion at Thonon, whither he went on foot, and to many other places, where our dear Mother is specially honoured.

He said his rosary every day with extraordinary devotion, and used to tell me that he found all his help in the Blessed Sacrament and in that Holy Virgin from whom he had received special and even miraculous assistance, as I have before said.

He placed our Order, which he himself instituted, under her protection, and named it after the sacred mystery of the Visitation, procuring for us the privilege of saying the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin only, a favour which has since been confirmed to us in perpetuity by our present Holy Father, Pope Urban VIII. The intention of our Blessed Founder in doing this was that there should be an Order in the Church of God, specially consecrated and dedicated to sing day and night the praises of that sovereign Queen, of whom he speaks so worthily and in such high terms in his books, and to whom he has even dedicated his *Treatise on the Love of God*. This is well and publicly known.

THIRTY-FOURTH POINT

HIS LOVE OF HIS ENEMIES

July 31, *at seven o'clock in the morning, she gave her answer to the thirty-fourth point as follows:*

It is well known that our Blessed Founder had a most cordial and charitable love for his enemies. He showed it practically by rendering good for evil to them whenever it was possible, as I have already shown in the chapter on patience. He often said, when exposed to various kinds of persecution, that if his tormentors had torn out one of his eyes he would have looked at them afterwards just as kindly as if they had done him no injury; adding that it was a simple duty to do this since Our Lord Himself commanded it.

On one occasion he was told in writing that a certain gentleman had spoken evil of him several times in society; he replied: "I am vexed that he should have done it, because of the scandal given thereby to my neighbour, but for my own part, what can I do but pray for him?"

Another gentleman had a suspicion that the holy Bishop had managed to get a legacy left to our House, which was perfectly untrue. The gentleman went to the Bishop's own room, and there poured forth a torrent of insulting words, even raising his hand to strike him. Our Blessed Founder, however, showed not the slightest disturbance or indignation on the occasion, and the

next day the gentleman, having been greatly touched by his virtue, and ashamed of his own behaviour, came again to him, this time throwing himself on his knees and expressing his deep contrition. Our Blessed Founder received him with his accustomed gentleness and kindliness, and cheerfully forgave him.

When some bitter calumny was cast upon him in a matter in which he was absolutely innocent, he replied to those who told him of it: "I have delivered over all those rough winds to the Providence of God; let them bluster as it pleases Him; tempest and calm are all the same to me. *Blessed are ye when they speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake* (Matt. v. 11). If the world found nothing to say against us, we should not be really the servants of God. The other day, when I said the name of St. Joseph in the Mass, I remembered the marvellous calmness which he displayed when he knew that his incomparable and Virgin Spouse was about to become a mother, and I commended to him the mind and the speech of these good gentlemen, that he might infuse into them a little of his own sweetness and kindliness. Then presently I recollected that Our Lady, in this perplexity, never said a word, never defended herself, and the Providence of God came to her assistance and delivered her. I therefore commended this matter to God, resolving to leave the care of it to Him and to keep myself calm; indeed what does one get by opposing oneself to the winds and

waves? One is only covered with foam! You all trouble yourselves too much about what concerns me; am I to be the only person in the world who is free from opprobrium?"

This which I have just told you is perfectly true. I have it in his own handwriting.

Monsieur le Curé de Viuz, who was called Louis of Geneva, a most virtuous and God-fearing man, told me that he was carrying on a lawsuit for the preservation of the rights of the bishopric against some gentlemen who had threatened it, and this the good Curé was doing by command of our Blessed Founder, who was then at Paris during his last journey. This lawsuit he gained, and costs were also awarded to him. On the return of the Bishop he listened very quietly to the account given him by the Curé of the whole business, and of the threats which had been fulminated against him, and then said: "Do you know, M. le Curé, what we will do? I should like you to go to them, and tell them from me, that I am quite ready to excuse them all past debts, and the costs of the suit, provided that they will, as I beg them to do, recognise for the future the rights of the bishopric." A fortnight was spent by the good Curé, at the expense of our Blessed Founder, in persuading these gentlemen to accept the courtesy offered them, which at last they did.

For a period of about two years one individual, from time to time, broke out into stinging words of disdain and contempt against the holy Bishop and our Order of the Visitation. He bore it

without any complaint, and on one occasion expressed to me in writing his tender affection for this person, in these words: "Ah! how earnestly I wish her well! Truly, I love her exceedingly." She died, and in a letter again he expressed his grief, and to me alone said: "I wish she had told me that she was sorry. Every day when I am at the holy altar I pray for her."

I declare again, as I believe it, that this holy Prelate loved his enemies tenderly, doing them all the good that lay in his power; indeed it was commonly said that whoever wanted a favour from this servant of God should do him an injury, for this was his only way of taking revenge.

THIRTY-FIFTH POINT

HIS ZEAL AND HIS MANY SERMONS

Her answer on the thirty-fifth point was:

It is well known that our Blessed Father instituted the Catechism classes in this town, arranging what he wished to teach. Every week he catechised, with so much devotion and such delightful charm of manner, that people thronged to hear him. His teaching was interwoven with anecdotes and illustrations so appropriate to his subject, that all who listened profited greatly, and each could carry away something. He himself questioned the children with such fatherly tenderness and kindness that his audience,

always a large one, was delighted. He ordered processions, singing Our Lady's Litany, and always took part in them himself.

After some years had passed, and when by his watchful care he had succeeded in establishing the Barnabite Fathers in this town, he gave over the charge of this catechising to them, and they discharged it most thoroughly, to the great profit of the young.

The holy Bishop preached the course of Lenten sermons for several years in his diocese, both in this city of Annecy and elsewhere, without charging the towns in any way with his expenses. He preached one Advent course, and for a whole year on Sundays and feasts in this town, taking for his subject the Commandments of God. Moreover, whenever he happened to be in the neighbourhood, he generally preached in one of the Churches of this town on the Sundays and festivals. And truly he preached like an Apostle, such was his zeal and burning desire for the conversion and profit of souls. It was easy to see that in these sermons this was his sole aim. He never thought about being a great preacher, though he was one indeed, and was acknowledged as such by universal opinion, but he never aspired to the reputation of one.

He was as happy to preach in the humblest pulpits as in the grandest, provided he could do as much good in the one as in the other. Once when he was in Paris he wrote to me thus: "I am preaching here, before these Princes and

Princesses, but I assure you that I do not do so better or more cheerfully than I did in our little Church of the Visitation." Indeed, it is certain that he sought only the profit of souls, not applause. He always entered the pulpit with great humility and dependence on the good pleasure of God. He was especially admired for the great ease and clearness with which he expressed himself, and for the simple and solid explanations which he gave of the deepest mysteries of our Holy Faith.

The last time our Blessed Founder went to Paris, he preached there the whole of the Lenten course of sermons, besides delivering an immense number of sermons in almost all the Churches.

During his first visit to Paris, when he stayed there for six months, he preached at least a hundred sermons, as eye-witnesses testify, in the great hall of the Louvre, as well as elsewhere. Very many heretics were converted by his sermons, especially the great family of the Raconis at Paris, whom he received into the Catholic Church, and two of whom are now great preachers, one a Capuchin.

He delivered a whole course of Lenten sermons at Dijon, where all admired and esteemed him as a truly apostolic man, whose exemplary life was as perfect a sermon as was his teaching. There he gained the hearts of all, and especially of some of the Members of Parliament. He also contracted a most close and lasting friendship with my brother, the

Archbishop of Bourges, assisting at his first Mass and receiving Communion from his hand, it being Holy Thursday; and this our Blessed Founder did with so much reverence and devotion that many who were present were filled with admiration. It was during this holy season of Lent that I had the unspeakable honour and happiness of becoming acquainted with this great Prelate, into whose hands, from that time forth, I confided the care of my soul absolutely and with perfect satisfaction.

He also preached two Lenten courses at Chambéry, before the Senate of Savoy, at his own expense, to the great contentment of all the people, as I have heard.

Again, he preached two Lenten courses and one Advent course of sermons at Grenoble before the Parliament, and it would be difficult to express the confidence which he inspired in the minds of both the great and the lowly, confirming the faith of those who were wavering on account of the heresy all about them, bringing profligates back to good lives, and increasing the number of his spiritual children by exercises of piety and devotion. I have even heard that the inhabitants of Grenoble have resolved to take him for the patron of their town, as soon as it shall have pleased His Holiness to beatify him. And in proof of their great veneration for his memory, I have noticed that both from the city of Grenoble as well as from Dauphiné, a great concourse of people of rank as well as others

come to visit his tomb and to place votive offerings there. And in every place in which our Blessed Founder preached, he was esteemed and honoured as one like to the Apostles and more than human in his holiness. In all those towns he gave audience to every one who sought him, hearing the confessions of innumerable penitents, delivering many conferences, giving instruction on the spiritual life, visiting the hospitals, prisoners, and the sick in their own homes. All this I have seen him do, during the Lent which he preached at Dijon.

He would never receive any present from the towns in which he preached, and I know for a certainty that he refused some silver plate which was pressed upon him at Dijon, and also a purse of money which, after he had preached in the Queen's Chapel at Paris, the Princess de Longueville, according to the custom of that city, offered him.

In short our Blessed Founder's zeal for the Faith and for the salvation of souls was inexpressible. His incessant labours for that end, and the numbers whom he converted to the Faith, or brought back to the service of God, are sufficient proofs of this fact.

He wrote once as follows about a Priest who had gone over to England to become a heretic: "O God! what sorrow fills my soul! Truly in all my life so terrible a shock has never before fallen upon me! Is it possible that this poor soul is thus lost? My own soul cannot calmly

look on, while the soul of this friend is perishing. Oh! how happy are the true children of Holy Church, in whose bosom all the children of God have died! My heart throbs with pain over this terrible fall, and yet at the same time with fresh courage to serve the Church of the living God, and the living God of the Church."

Again, on the same subject he writes: "Oh! how vain are men when they believe in themselves: *For it must needs be that scandals come, but, nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh!* (Matt. xviii. 7). This young man would never govern himself as I wished him to do; he always rejected the sweet and easy yoke of Our Lord. But courage! I do not despair of seeing him one day recross the sea and come back safely to port [and this happened, for he has since returned to the Catholic Church]; still I weep over him from my very heart. He wrote to me about his fall, saying: *I am separating myself from the Church, that I may retire into England, whither,* so he expresses himself, *God calls me.* Who would not groan over these words, since to separate oneself from the Church is to separate oneself from God. But let us take heart; God can make even the loss of those who abandon Him redound to His glory. I must conclude by telling you that God has cheered me, in the midst of all my grief over the fall of this young man, by a fresh infusion of sweetness, peace, and spiritual light, so as to make me admire more and more the excellence of the Catholic Faith."

"I must tell you," he wrote to me at another time, "that I am just now very sad at heart; for from Twelfth Day till Lent I have been strangely troubled. Miserable and detestable even as I am myself, it overwhelms me with grief to see so great a falling off in the devotion of my people, so many souls relaxing their efforts after holiness. These last two Sundays our Communions have been only half their usual number, which makes me very sad, for even if those who have been absent do not become wicked, why do they cease to do well for the sake of mere follies? That is what I feel. Well, let us, then, invoke the blessing of God upon ourselves, and thank Him that we have resolved never to do the same. No, I do not think that we could thus of deliberate purpose delay one step on our road for all that the world might offer us. No, assuredly no, by God's grace, no."

I repeat, then, that it is impossible to express the ardent zeal of our Blessed Founder for the holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Faith, and for the preaching of the Word of God. This is well known.

THIRTY-SIXTH POINT

HIS WORKS OF MERCY

Her answer on the thirty-sixth point was:

It is well known that the holy Bishop visited the sick and prisoners, that he was a true father

to the poor, and that any needy or afflicted person who appealed to him, or whose wants were in any way made known to him, he relieved in the best manner and to the utmost extent possible to him.

On one occasion he went to visit an old man who was in a very terrible and repulsive condition. The daughter said: "I fear, my lord, that the odour will be very disagreeable to you." He answered: "To me, such bad odours are as the scent of roses."

This is true, and I have spoken more fully on this subject in the article on his love of his neighbour.

THIRTY-SEVENTH POINT

HIS INTERIOR PEACE, AND HIS EFFORTS TO SETTLE LAWSUITS AND MAKE PEACE

Her answer on the thirty-seventh point was:

Our Blessed Founder was a very great lover of peace. In this, no one came up to him; peace had taken so deep a root in his heart that nothing could shake it; he often said: "Come what may, I will not lose one atom of peace, the grace of God assisting me." He used to say that nothing ought to be able to deprive us of peace, even should all things be turned upside down, for what is the whole world compared to peace of heart? What he said he also practised, and was

regarded by all as the most peaceable soul ever known.

Monseigneur de Bérulle, a Prelate distinguished by his rare virtue, piety, and learning, General of the Fathers of the Oratory in France, told a very worthy Nun, who in her turn told me, that our Blessed Founder possessed an *imperturbable* peace, and it is a fact that, having this treasure in himself, he communicated it to those who approached him. Indeed it is impossible to say how many, who came to him troubled and anxious, went away tranquil and at peace. I speak from experience: this has happened to me many times, as well as to persons of my acquaintance.

It was generally said that he had received the special gift of being able to impart peace to those who held intercourse with him. I remember an instance of two men who were disputing most violently in our parlour. The holy Bishop looked at them with exceeding gentleness, now at one, now at the other, speaking at the same time so pleasantly, that at last his sweetness touched them; they calmed down and he dismissed them in peace.

To all the souls under his direction he recommended this holy peace, and incessantly, as far as he could, laboured to give it to them.

He was almost always busied in settling disputes between would-be litigants, little as he liked the task; for he had, as he once told me, the most heartfelt dislike of lawsuits and of all kinds of contentions. A great part of his time

was, however, occupied by labours of this sort, for he was always being chosen as arbitrator between all kinds of people. To the complaints of each and all he listened calmly without the least sign of weariness, not showing more bias towards one than towards another, and in the end sending them all away well satisfied.

The same day, July 31, *at three o'clock in the afternoon:*

In continuation of my deposition with regard to the same thirty-seventh point I may tell you that a lawyer in this town of Annecy had grievously offended a member of the holy Bishop's household, striking him and even drawing blood, the injured person being a distinguished Ecclesiastic. The Senate of Savoy would probably have condemned the offender to death, had not the Bishop, putting aside the insult offered to his own dignity, persuaded the Priest to pardon this outrage, and interceded for the culprit with the dispenser of justice, getting him by this means acquitted, to the great admiration of every one.

On another occasion he was entreated, by a man of high position in the city of Geneva, to arbitrate in a difference which he had with M. le Comte de Saint-Alban, a nobleman in Savoy: this he did with so much prudence that, preserving the rights of both, he satisfied the Catholic nobleman as much as the heretic, from which fact we may gather how strong a belief

even the enemies of our religion had in his probity. The lawsuits to which he put an end and the differences which he reconciled were innumerable; indeed he was almost constantly occupied with such matters.

I have heard it said that in the midst of all the tumult and commotion stirred up round about him by attorneys, advocates, and disputing parties, the holy Bishop remained perfectly calm, showing not the slightest sign of impatience or weariness in face or words; undisturbed even when things went the wrong way. Indeed, though he might have wasted his whole day and undergone much inconvenience to himself and in his affairs, he proceeded to take them up again with the same sweetness and devotion that he would have brought with him to his religious exercises. This I know from what his Confessor has told me.

He was very careful to keep himself recollected in God in the midst of all those occupations; indeed he used to say that we ought to deal with the affairs of earth with our eyes fixed on heaven; that all that is done for love's sake is love; that neither toil nor death itself are anything but love, when it is for the love of God that we accept them.

M. de la Roche, a gentleman of exemplary life, of rare piety, and great learning, told me that he had been present with our Blessed Founder at more than a hundred cases of arbitration, and had seen and heard him conversing with an immense number of people on all sorts of busi-

ness matters; and that, having considered his actions closely, he had never seen him do, or heard him say, anything approaching a venial sin. The President Flocard, a most excellent man, who saw him also on all sorts of occasions, told me the same thing, although in different terms, and both of them assured me how greatly they admired the conduct, the virtue, and the extraordinarily calm and equable temper of our Blessed Founder.

All this is true, &c.

THIRTY-EIGHTH POINT

HIS VIRTUE OF RELIGION

Her answer on the thirty-eighth point was:

All who knew him can testify that the holy Bishop possessed in a supereminent degree the virtue of the holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion. He held in the highest respect all that had to do with Divine worship, and performed all its actions with a profound reverence, gravity and devotion, having before his eyes the greatness of Him Whom he was serving. At the principal feasts of the Church, he displayed a sort of radiant joyousness, doubtless because his thoughts were wholly absorbed in the great mysteries which the Church was then commemorating. He celebrated the sacred offices at those times pontifically, with such profound attention, such intense recollection, and

such meek dignity, that those who were present were filled with admiration. I was a witness of this before I entered religion.

He especially loved preaching at the great festivals, so as to stir up his people to celebrate them devoutly, and to make them understand the mysteries which Holy Church then commemorated, in order to kindle their fervour.

He said Holy Mass every day, and, as has been already mentioned, with profound devotion. When he carried the Blessed Sacrament in processions, he held It pressed to his breast, his eyes almost closed, and his countenance so calm and abstracted in its expression, that it was evident how closely his heart was united to that of his Saviour. In this action, all who saw him were filled with admiration, and felt their own devotion kindled by it.

One day, when he had been carrying this Divine Sacrament in procession all through the town, on the Feast of Corpus Christi, the heat of the weather being extraordinary, and his fatigue, as we knew, extreme, we, fearing that his health might have suffered, sent to know how he was. He wrote to us thus: "Yes, it is true that I was a little weary in body, but in heart and mind how could I be so, after having held on my breast and close to my heart a burden so divine, as I did this morning all through the procession? Ah! if humility and self-contempt had made my heart a deeper and more sheltered resting-place for that most holy Treasure, It would doubtless

have taken refuge there, not only outwardly but inwardly in my heart, for so much does our dearest Lord love these virtues that wherever He sees them dwelling, He takes the fortress by storm. *The sparrow has found herself a house and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones* (Ps. lxxxiii.), says David. My God! when this psalm was sung, how deeply my heart was stirred within me! for I said to myself: Sweet Queen of heaven, pure turtle dove! is it possible that thy little One has now His nest in my breast? And again these words of the Bride touched me deeply: *My Beloved to me and I to Him* (Cant. ii. 16), *He shall abide between my breasts* (Ib. i. 12), for I held Him there; and those of the Bridegroom: *Put me as a seal upon thy heart* (Ib. viii. 6). Ah yes! but having taken away the seal I do not see its impression left upon my heart." At another time he wrote: "To-day is the great Festival of the Church, on which, carrying the Saviour in the procession, He of His infinite grace gave me a thousand sweet thoughts—so sweet that, as they filled my mind, I could scarcely restrain my tears. I compared myself with the High Priest of the Old Law, and considered how he wore a rich breastplate adorned with twelve precious stones, in which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. But ah! how much richer was my breastplate, although composed of only one single pearl, since that is the Pearl of great price, formed out of the blessed dew from heaven in the spotless womb of the

Mother Pearl. For, remember, I was holding the Blessed Sacrament pressed to my breast, and it seemed to me that all the names of the children of Israel were graven upon it. Ah! would that my heart could have opened to receive this precious Saviour! But alas! I had not the sword with which to pierce it, for only love can do that. Yet at least I had a great desire to possess that love." Such were the holy thoughts which filled the heart of our Blessed Founder while he was carrying the Saviour of the world on his breast.

He took part in all the processions where his presence was needed, with such modesty and recollection as to inspire reverence in all beholders. Sometimes he was recognised in that of the penitents who on the night of Holy Thursday walk, clothed in black, and barefooted, and there was nothing to distinguish him from the others.

He never failed to be present at the preaching of sermons in the city: he listened to them with great attention, and when, on leaving the Church, he went to preach elsewhere, which he generally did, he frequently repeated something which he had heard, adding words of praise of the preacher, for he often said that there was nothing good in himself, except that he loved to hear the Word of God. He told us to make it a rule to honour the Word of God through whatever channel it came to us, and never to criticise or censure the preacher.

He generally went to say Holy Mass at places where there were Indulgences; he was present at the public prayers and Benediction of the Most

Blessed Sacrament which took place in the evening, often desiring these to be offered for the necessities of Princes and their people; he never failed to say Mass in Churches on the feasts of their Patron Saints: he often preached there, and took part in the prayers which were said after the sermon, and on all these occasions and in all these places his attentive devotion was conspicuous.

He held the relics of the Saints in great honour. The Prior of Quoëx, whom I have already mentioned, told me how much he had admired the reverence and devotion with which the holy Prelate knelt before the relics of St. Germain, while his brother, the Bishop of Chalcedon, was consecrating the altar of the Chapel. The Prior said that he never saw him turn his head, or move his eyes from these holy relics, and that he spoke afterwards of his happiness in this contemplation.

When he was preaching at Grenoble one Lent, the Minimes begged him to go and preach in their Church on the Feast of St. Francis of Paola. After his sermon they showed him the cloak of St. Francis. Our Blessed Founder being on his knees before it, the people came crowding round him to venerate the sacred relic, jostling him and treading on his feet, pushing him and pressing on him, without his making the slightest movement or gesture to prevent them. There he knelt motionless, absorbed in his prayers, calm and devout, to the great admiration of one who was present at this scene and described it to me.

He honoured all according to their rightful claims, but especially Priests. He wrote thus on one occasion: "I do not at all approve of Priests being made use of in menial household offices, and if sometimes their poverty should make this permissible or even desirable, however homely and unpolished they may be, we must never lose sight of the respect due to their condition and to their priestly character. I see that everywhere they are treated according to their birth and social position, but this I cannot suffer; it disgusts me absolutely." A person speaking to him one day of an Ecclesiastic as "the little Priest," he reproved her for using the expression, as not sufficiently respectful.

And this is well known, &c.

THIRTY-NINTH POINT

HIS CONFORMITY TO THE WILL OF GOD

Her answer on the thirty-ninth point was:

I have always known that our Blessed Founder was absolutely resigned to the good pleasure of God, on which he depended unreservedly and entirely. He used to say that nothing that could ever happen would deprive him of his fixed resolution to acquiesce perfectly in all that God wished to do with him, and with whatever belonged to him.

About five weeks after he had taken in hand

the establishment of our Congregation of the Visitation, I fell ill of a fever, in which my life was despaired of. Hearing of my dangerous condition, he came to visit me, and said: "Perhaps God intends to be satisfied with our attempt, and with the goodwill with which we set to work to prepare this little society for Him, just as He was satisfied with the readiness which Abraham showed to sacrifice his son. If, then, it is His good pleasure that, having reached the middle of our journey, we should turn back, His Will be done!" Now, I may say with truth that this was an heroic act of resignation, on account of the great benefits which he expected that souls would derive from this manner of life.

In a dangerous illness which he had before his consecration, he resigned himself calmly to death, saying that, were it not for the mercy of God, he should be consumed, but that he hoped that same mercy would be as favourable to him now, at the present hour, as it would be twenty or thirty years hence.

It is, however, quite certain that life and death were equally indifferent to him, and that he kept himself always prepared for death, as he proved to his brother, the Bishop of Chalcedon, who, on one occasion, remarked to our Blessed Founder that he found him thoughtful and sad. "No," he answered, "I am not at all sad, but I am on the watch that I may hear when the hour for my departure strikes."

He lost by death his father, two of his brothers,

both men worthy to be regretted, and whose death was a great grief to him, also a sister and a sister-in-law. In the depth of his sorrow he exclaimed: *I was dumb,* O Lord, *and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it* (Ps. xxxviii. 10).

On the death of his mother, whom he loved as himself, he told me in writing that when he had closed her eyes, and given her the last kiss of peace at the moment when her soul left the body, his heart swelled within him, and he wept over this good mother more tears than he had shed since he had been a Priest, but yet not tears of bitterness: "For," he added, "it was a calm sorrow though a keen one. I said, like David: *I was dumb,* O Lord, *and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it.* Doubtless, if it had not been for that thought, I should have broken out into passionate lamentations, but it seemed to me that I dared not cry out or complain under the blows of that fatherly Hand, which truly, thanks to His goodness, I have learned to love tenderly from my youth upwards."

Again he said to me: "In the midst of my heart of flesh, which was so torn with grief at this death, I can feel a certain sweet tranquillity and gentle repose of mind resting on Divine Providence, which sheds forth into my soul a great contentment amid all its troubles."

I have heard that, a short time before the death of our Blessed Founder, the Most Serene Prince Cardinal of Savoy sent for him to Avignon. His friends, considering the weak state of his

health and the inclemency of the weather, entreated him not to take this journey, which would certainly do him harm. "How can that be helped?" replied the holy Bishop. "We are going where we are called, and shall stay there as long as we are able; if sickness or any other cause stops us, we shall remain, and come back as and when it pleases God."

He was seized with apoplexy, and died perfectly and absolutely resigned to the good pleasure of God, that is to say, quite indifferent. Before starting on this journey he came to bid our Nuns farewell. "May God bring you back to us, my lord!" they cried. "And if it is not His good pleasure to do so," he answered, "what will you have to say to that?"

One Lent, when he was intending to preach, he fell sick of a fever. He wrote thus to me: "If God wishes me to serve Him not by preaching but by suffering, His Will be done!"

If my memory does not err, and I think it does not, there was a talk at one time of his imprisonment. He said: "If they were to put me in prison I should not care the least, for then I should have more leisure for praying to God and writing something which would redound to His glory." There was also some idea of taking away his bishopric. "Well," he said, "if they did, I should be more free to serve God and souls."

He was even quite ready to die by the hand of the executioner if that should be the good pleasure of God. He once said to me that it

seemed to him that if God should permit him to be wrongfully accused of the greatest crimes and offences possible to be committed, and condemned on that account to suffer some terrible punishment, he could undergo it, provided that the grace of God assisted him, calmly, quietly, and with entire resignation, not fretting at all, so long as he was innocent in the sight of God; but that what would trouble him would be, to be accused of heresy, on account of the scandal and prejudice which that might cause to souls.

It would be impossible to express the extreme indifference of his own individual will: it was very certain that it was absolutely subject to the Divine Will; indeed he used to say of himself that he left it to Our Lord to will what He pleased for him, surrendering all superfluous care of himself into the hands of God.

He loved especially those words of St. Paul: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* (Acts ix. 6), because, he said, they were so admirable. One day, writing to some one, he said how much he delighted in these words of St. Paul, and added humbly: "I said them this morning to God, but I dare not say them now, because I have found out that I know only too well what He would have me to do: He wills that I should mortify myself in all the powers of my soul, and that I should be a chosen vessel to carry His holy name among the people. But, alas! what I know He wills me to do, I know not how to do it. May He, then, Who knows how to do it, do

it in me and by me; but may He do it all for Himself; to Whom I have been able to give nothing but this poor little thread of goodwill, which I feel down in the very depths of my miserable heart. This goodwill lives in me, but I am dead in it, and am conscious only of a slow and feeble movement, by which I sigh forth almost imperceptibly the sacred watchword of our faithfulness: *Vive Jésus, Live Jesus!*" He was absolutely as indifferent to sickness as to health, to life as to death, to contempt as to praise, to the employment of his time and whole life, to poverty as to riches, to the loss of those who were dear to him as to their preservation; in short, in all things his heart was indifferent, loving supremely the good pleasure of God. This is why, as he has himself told me, in trouble and distress he experienced a sweetness far surpassing any that he felt at other times—the sweetness that came from a perfect submission and union of his own mind with the mind of God. I say these things firmly and unhesitatingly, because I have myself been a witness of them again and again, and on no single occasion have I seen our Blessed Founder fail in them.

Here, again, are words confirming this fact. "It is," he wrote to me one day, "a great satisfaction to my soul, which is truly dedicated to God, to walk along with my eyes shut, just as and where Divine Providence leads me from time to time; for His reasons and judgments are impenetrable, yet always sweet and pleasant to

those who trust in Him. What do we will, except what God wills? Let us leave Him to guide our soul, which is His vessel; He will bring it safe to port. Oh! how happy are those souls which only live in this Divine Will!"

On another occasion, when some hindrance occurred which prevented his doing something which he had planned and very much wished to do, he wrote to me thus: "The glory of God has thus disposed it, and you know what fidelity I have always vowed to it alone; this is why I leave to it unreservedly to rule thus over my affections, on occasions when I see that it is required of me."

On the subject of a most poignant affliction he wrote thus: "We must pause speechless when the decrees of the heavenly Will are issued, for God disposes of His children according to what is for His greatest glory. In fact it is not in our power to keep any of the consolations which He gives us, excepting the one of loving Him above all things, which is indeed the blessing supremely to be desired. Oh my God! how good it is to live in Thee alone, to work in Thee alone, and to rejoice in Thee alone!"

I should never come to an end if I were to attempt to repeat here all the proofs of our Blessed Founder's absolute resignation and indifference to all things except the will of God. This fact is well known, and cannot be doubted by those who came in contact with him. It is true, &c.

FORTIETH POINT

HIS DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS AND GIFT OF PROPHECY

August 2, 1627, at seven o'clock in the morning, she answered the fortieth point as follows:

Of all the gifts which our Blessed Founder received from God, that of the discernment of spirits was one of the most eminent, and was a fact so well known to all who visited him most frequently, and were most intimate with him, that they, as well as people from all parts, came to him for enlightenment in difficulties of conscience. I know that many Prelates, Heads of Religious Houses, Monks, Parish Priests, private Gentlemen and Lawyers, Princes and Princesses, and persons of all ranks, rich and poor, from different provinces, came to him for this purpose. The number of souls directed by him in the way of Christian perfection is almost innumerable. I have never heard of any one of them who fell away from the fear of God, or was misled by any deceits, excepting one individual who lived far away from him, and that instance is not absolutely certain.

When he passed through any town he had such a reception as no one else ever received. Even the most experienced spiritual Fathers came to consult him, and sent their penitents to him to be enlightened in the most difficult points of the spiritual life. A great servant of God

assured me that Father Coton, a Jesuit, and a man of extraordinary piety, speaking to her about a soul then in his charge, and led in most strange paths, said that although several other servants of God thought well of this person, he could not feel perfectly sure of her, until he had the opinion and testimony of our Blessed Founder, with whom this great Father Coton had so much and so often wished to confer.

The Reverend Father Suffren, a Jesuit, the Confessor of the most Christian King and of the Queen his mother, a man of the deepest humility, and well skilled in the direction of souls, said that after having consulted our Blessed Founder, he had learned more as to such direction in the nine hours or thereabouts during which he had conversed with him on the subject, than he had done as yet in the whole course of his life.

The Reverend Dom Sens, who was General of the Feuillants and a man of rare piety, also told the above-mentioned servant of God that the number of those who had received the gift of the discernment of spirits was very small, but that our Blessed Founder possessed it, and this in an eminent degree; this is a well-known fact.

The holy Bishop had such a penetrating insight into the souls of men, that when he was consulted, either personally or by letter, on matters of conscience, he discerned with extraordinary delicacy and clearness the inclinations and secret moving springs of those souls, and spoke in terms so precise, definite, and intelligible, that he

made them understand with the greatest ease the most intricate and lofty matters relating to the spiritual life. This is very plainly seen in his published Letters. I know this of my own experience, but others have also told me so. He assured some persons who communicated their spiritual necessities to him that he saw their hearts as clearly as through a crystal. To how many souls has he not said: "You are not speaking plainly," which was perfectly true, as some one to whom this happened told me. He said to one: "You are hiding from me what one day, when it is too late, you will wish you had told me." And so it really was; and others have assured me that they were constrained by the force of remorse of conscience, to come back to him that they might explain themselves fully.

Generally speaking, it was impossible to conceal anything from him: indeed, people used to say that he knew their hearts and all their thoughts quite well. I have been assured by reliable persons that he had actually told them what they were thinking about. He could also discern if any one was possessed or not. He often told his penitents what they wished to say before they had spoken, and that he could do this was an almost universal belief among those who made their confessions to him. A certain person of high rank who had gone astray, and fallen into some secret sin, owned ingenuously that he dared not show himself to our Blessed Founder for fear he should know what he had done.

There was a certain Nun who had great and most extraordinary visions and revelations. These were communicated to several doctors of divinity, and had even been approved by four Religious, doctors of divinity belonging to different reformed Orders. Our Blessed Founder was informed of this in writing, and without having seen the person in whom all these graces were said to have operated, he, though with his usual modesty, condemned the whole matter, forbidding at the same time any contention with those who had given their approval to it, and very soon afterwards it was plainly proved that the thing was nothing but an imposture. He gave suitable advice for the guidance of this soul, and she afterwards acknowledged her sin, and died a holy death. He undeceived many others, and he has never, to my knowledge, approved the turn of mind and spiritual life of any one without its being thoroughly good and solid.

From various quarters I know that his advice was sought on these supernatural occurrences: he did not despise them, but at the same time he never made much of them. It was only true virtues that he reckoned as of real account. I know that he often calmed excited spirits with a single word.

There were many souls (and I myself among the number) who, being anxious and disquieted with many troubles, and coming to him in their distress, were, by the grace of God, calmed sometimes by a single word of his. I have heard that

this was the case with a soul tormented with scruples and the fear of being lost, to whom, after having heard her pour forth all the anguish of her spirit, he said: *You must lose your soul in order to save it.* When she expressed a desire to receive fuller instructions from him: "No," said he, "that is enough; you need submission more than reasoning." And she then left him, greatly calmed and consoled.

To another who suffered from very much the same mental disquietude, he only said: "Do not be anxious about anything; submit absolutely to the good pleasure of God," and at once a great peace and calmness fell upon her soul, and abode there ever after.

M. le President de la Valbonne went to him one day, in great disturbance of mind. Before he had time to explain his trouble, our Blessed Founder led him into his study and made him read a chapter of the *Treatise on Divine Love,* which he was at that time writing. After the good man had read it, he became quite calm, and unburdened of the trouble which had been oppressing him interiorly. Many were quieted by a single glance from him, others by reading his letters; and in fact innumerable maladies of restless souls were cured by him.

In conformity with the Spirit of God which acted in him, he was always quick to recognise the dispositions of the souls with whom he came in contact, and if he found them not prepared for what he was going to say, would stop short,

not wishing to waste words where there was no audience; but as soon as he recognised the unction of the Spirit of God, he poured into these souls the instruction necessary for their welfare.

Moreover, I have noticed, that quite gladly he left the Holy Spirit to do His work freely in souls, and he himself followed the attraction of that Divine Spirit, and guided them as they were led by God, leaving them to follow the Divine inspirations, rather than his own instructions. I have observed this in my own case, and I have also been told of it by others with whom he dealt in the same manner; and, if I am not mistaken, he showed by thus acting great enlightenment in the discerning of spirits.

He was absolutely admirable and incomparable in his method of training minds according to their various capacities, without ever urging them on unduly: indeed he gave and imprinted upon the hearts of his penitents a certain liberty which set them free from all scruples and difficulties, and raised the soul to such a tender love of God, that every hindrance to the devout life vanished. To this fact all his books bear ample testimony, and I know that there was an inexpressible sweetness in obeying his counsels; indeed as regards myself, my only trouble was that he did not give me commands enough.

A young girl, who was thinking of entering our Order, came to ask him when he would like her to do so. He answered firmly: "You will never be a Nun, but this little sister of yours will be

one." The child to whom he alluded was then only twelve years old, but it turned out exactly as our Blessed Founder had predicted; the elder girl married, the younger took the veil, and is now Superior of one of the Convents of our Order.

In these matters the holy Bishop received great enlightenment from God, by means of prayer. I remember that the late M. Favre, First President of the Supreme Senate of Savoy, a most excellent man, of rare humility and piety, the intimate friend of our Blessed Founder, told me that as he was in very great affliction about the soul of his wife, who had died without confession, he came to tell him of his trouble. The holy Bishop prayed for her, and then said to the President: "Do not grieve any more about the soul of my sister (so he called her); rest assured that it is in the way of salvation."

In the year 1616 the Duke de Nemours came with a large army to take possession of this province of Savoy. Every one believed the ruin of the country and the taking of this town to be inevitable. Our Blessed Founder, after having thought a while over this disturbance, declared with great firmness that it would all soon die away, and so it did, just at the time predicted by him.

When tidings were brought to him of the illness of a sister-in-law, he went to say Mass for her; on his return he told me that he had not known how to pray for her as a sick person, but could only do so for her as dead, which indeed

she was at the time, as we soon afterwards heard.

Five or six years before I took the veil, I said to him: "My lord, will you never take me away from the world?" He answered with extraordinary firmness: "Yes, and some day you will leave all things; you will come to me, and your portion will be the utter destitution of the Cross." This did indeed take place, and by means so far removed from any that human prudence would have suggested, that they can be attributed only to the Providence of God.

I know that to a great many people he predicted events, which really happened, and of which he could have known nothing except by the gift of prophecy; such as the issue—humanly speaking, absolutely uncertain—of various matters. For example, he predicted to Madame de Crémieux, a lady living in his diocese, who had lost many children at their birth, that she would at last become the happy mother of a living child. This was so, and the child born at that time is living still. This is true, &c.

FORTY-FIRST POINT

HIS MAGNANIMITY

Her answer on the forty-first point was:

Our Blessed Founder possessed a courage so great and noble, so generous and so magnanimous, that he was never intimidated by any

living creature or any earthly thing. He was far above all that when it was a question of what related to the glory of God. He laughed to scorn honours, and benefits, and the favours of the great, placing no reliance whatever upon them, any more than he did on life or death, relations or friends; his mind rose superior to all these things and had the mastery of them. Such was his magnanimity.

It was also displayed in an infinity of great and difficult enterprises which he undertook, as appears in my depositions, Point 28, treating of his fortitude.

He wrote to me once that he had done a great many courageous acts out of sheer simplicity, "Not certainly," he added, "out of simplicity of mind, for I do not wish to speak in a double manner, but from simplicity of confidence in God." This he told me when speaking on the subject of his passing through Geneva after he became Bishop, on his way to Gex, where he was going to re-establish the Catholic Faith in several parishes. For, finding it very dangerous to cross the Rhone at the port, he bravely determined to do so by the bridge of Geneva, and he traversed the whole city at the peril of his life, to the astonishment of those who knew that he had resolved to attempt this crossing. And had he been questioned as to who he was, he would have died rather than deny it; indeed he had commanded his servants, if asked at the gate, who this person was in whose suite they

were, to reply: *the Bishop of the diocese,* which they did.

He never attributed the honours which so many Princes, Princesses, and great people paid him as due to any merit of his own. He referred all to God, and never took advantage of such, except in some matter which concerned the glory of God or the good of his neighbour; as in the instance of the establishment of the Barnabite Fathers in this town of Annecy and at Thonon; for our own Order; and for such work as required the support of a Prince's authority, and sometimes of his pecuniary assistance. Thus, at times, this was needed for the protection of persons unjustly molested, or to procure favours and help for others, and even pensions for poor people who had been converted to our Catholic religion.

When his Most Serene Highness the Duke of Savoy gave him the appointment of Grand Almoner to the Princess of Piedmont, he wrote to me thus: "You will, I think, readily believe me when I tell you that I have neither directly nor indirectly striven for this post; no indeed, for I feel within me no sort of ambition, except to be able to employ the remainder of my life usefully for the honour of Our Lord."

He said once with regard to some proposals which had been made to him touching his own private advantage: "How could you imagine me to be so poor-spirited a creature as to aim at any reward except that of eternity! I hold the

Court in sovereign contempt, because the world's supremest pleasures and all its maxims I abhor more and more."

He saw that it would be a great advantage to his bishopric if his brother succeeded him in it, yet he never spoke of the matter to the Prince, and told me in writing, when the Duke of Savoy gave his brother the certificate of the Coadjutorship, that he had never sought or asked for it, either directly or indirectly. This is true, &c.

FORTY-SECOND POINT

HIS ASSIDUITY IN THE CONFESSIONAL

Her answer on the forty-second point was:

Our Blessed Founder was absolutely incomparable in the zeal and charity which he displayed in the Confessional. He gave himself up absolutely to this sacred work, with no measure or limit save the necessity of those who had recourse to him. For them, knowing how great a profit this Sacrament brings to souls, he put aside whatever else he was doing—unless, indeed, he happened to be occupied in some business still more important to the glory of God. Numbers of people, noblemen, ladies of rank, citizens, soldiers, maid-servants, peasants, beggars, sick persons, even those afflicted with the most loathsome and revolting diseases, came to him on Sundays and Festivals, and were received by him

with no distinction of persons, but with equal love and gentleness. Indeed he never refused to see any one, however mean and wretched, but on the contrary, I firmly believe he felt a deeper affection for such, treating them more tenderly than the rich and fortunate, for this, he said, was true charity. Even children were not denied an audience by our Blessed Founder, and he received them so kindly that they delighted to come back to him again and again.

He gave his penitents all the time and opportunity which they desired in order to explain themselves clearly and fully. He never hurried them. Besides the above-mentioned seasons, at whatever day or hour they asked for him, he left everything to go to them, sometimes even giving up going to recite Office in the Cathedral, or delaying the saying of Mass although he was ready vested, or getting up from his meals, to the vexation of his servants, who vainly tried to dissuade him from so doing.

At the great Festivals, Jubilees, and similar occasions he was often obliged to hear confessions day and night. One day I saw him overwhelmed with fatigue. "These days," he said to me, "are worth their weight in gold to me, I am hearing so great a number of confessions." In order to give confidence to his penitents he used to say to them: "Make no difference between your heart and mine; I am wholly yours, our souls are one."

He wept with some over their sins, and treated his penitents so gently that they melted before

him. On one occasion he wrote to me thus: "We have had a great Jubilee here, which has kept me very busy, but much consoled by the hearing of many general confessions, and by promises of amendment from my penitents, which I have gathered in with tears, partly of joy, partly of love."

Another time he wrote thus to me: "Four days ago I received into the bosom of the Church and to Confession a gentleman, twenty years of age. O Saviour of my soul! what joy it was to hear him so devoutly accusing himself of his sins, and by so doing revealing so clearly those hidden springs and motions of the Providence of God, which in so admirable and sublime a manner had lifted him out of the mire! I felt almost beside myself with joy. How many kisses of peace I gave him."

When he knew that, either from shame or fear, his penitents found it difficult to express themselves plainly in Confession, he tried by all possible means to open their hearts and increase their confidence. "Am I not your father?" he would say to them again and again until they answered: "Yes," and then would go on to say: "Do you not really wish to tell me everything? God is waiting for you to open your hearts, His arms are extended to receive you. You see that I am in the place of God, and you are ashamed to be plain with me; but apart from that I am a sinner, and if you had committed all the crimes in the world I should not be astonished at them."

He even, with the greatest gentleness, helped them to explain their sins, when he saw that from ignorance or shame they had difficulty in telling them.

After Confession he spoke such-like cheering words: "Oh! how dear your soul and all its revelations are to me! Now the angels are rejoicing and exulting over this action, and I join with them in congratulating you upon it; but you must promise Our Lord and me also not to fall back again."

When he saw that there was no real contrition accompanying the confession he would elicit it by a few short words, such as: "You wish that you had never offended God, do you not?" And sometimes he would cause the penitent to repeat something of which he had accused himself in order to overcome the repugnance felt in declaring it.

He gave very slight penances, and used to say: "You will do what I tell you, will you not? then say such and such a thing," naming some vocal prayer which could be easily said, and never giving as a penance meditation on some mystery, or anything of that kind.

He spoke very little at Confession, unless it was necessary to remove vain scruples or to enlighten his penitents as to what was sin and what was not. What he did say, nevertheless, touched the heart far more than long harangues would have done, and one left him full of courage, and often with much recollection and a deep sense of the presence of God.

He liked people to be simple, clear, and artless in Confession, and told his penitents that it was necessary to make it clearly understood what impulses had led to the commission of sins, and that they must not make their confessions in an off-hand way, but must show the Confessor plainly all the moving springs which had brought about such a result, otherwise it would be impossible ever to be thoroughly cleansed from them. By this zeal in purging souls by plain confession, he rooted out many evil passions which others, who did not follow this method, might have left there.

With this extraordinary kindliness he opened hearts the most closely shut, drew out the evil hidden in them, and in its place planted gentle affections and firm resolutions. The decisive character of the solutions he gave was incomparable; he cleared up all doubts and scruples of conscience instantly, and restored peace and calm to the soul.

The same day, at two o'clock in the afternoon:

Continuing the subject of the preceding point (the forty-second), I add that it would be impossible to enumerate all those who by the help of our Blessed Founder were led on further and further in the way of Christian perfection, and that only we, who have seen so many of his penitents beginning a new life and full of ardour, could believe it. In short, every one who came to him in a right spirit left him with great profit

to their souls and an earnest desire to come to him again, and they encouraged one another in such desires.

In Paris, where he often heard confessions in our Church, and also at Grenoble, I have seen crowds of people of rank of both sexes. God only knows the infinite number of souls won for His Divine Majesty through the medium of this Blessed Founder, for his wide-spread reputation of being unequalled in gentleness and piety, and incomparable in his method of directing souls, brought penitents to him from all quarters.

When it was known that he was passing through a town, or to the country house of any of his friends, he was always called upon to hear general confessions, and, as he used to say, his penitents kept for him the deepest recesses of their conscience and the things which they had great difficulty in telling to others. This is true, &c.

FORTY-THIRD POINT

HIS CARE FOR THE PERFECTION OF MONASTIC ORDERS

Her answer on the forty-third point was:

I have always observed in our Blessed Founder, a great love for the work of reforming Religious Houses of either men or women, and of perfecting souls called by God to that holy vocation, and with these objects in view, he drew up with his

own hand excellent memorials, which he gave to his Highness the Prince of Piedmont, who was very anxious about the reform of the monasteries in his dominions.

He expended great labour and care upon several Religious Houses, and among others on that of St. Catherine of the Order of St. Bernard, close to this town of Annecy, in which God blessed his efforts greatly, the Nuns living there at this present time in a most pious and edifying manner though not enclosed; and some of them, by the advice of our Blessed Founder, have retired to Rumilly, a little town in this diocese, where they live a cloistered life with so much perfection, that they have attracted numbers of Nuns of that Order, and also many young girls from the world, forming three or four Houses of this reform, to the great glory of God. It would be impossible in writing, to give an idea of the patience exercised by the holy Bishop towards the Mother Abbess of St. Catherine, in order to win her confidence and to persuade her to let him hear the confessions of her Nuns, which she did not wish to do, although they all desired it ardently, and to give him the entire charge of their consciences; for, as some of them have told me, his very presence inspired them with devotion and a hatred of sin.

He reformed the Priory of Talloires, of the Order of St. Benedict, spending much time and pains upon this work, and also the Abbey of Sixt in his diocese, of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, and prescribed for them rules,

according to which they live and serve God. He went twice to a Benedictine Abbey in Burgundy.

He revived the devotion due to the Blessed Virgin under the title of the Visitation, which devotion had, before the ravages of heresy, been practised in the mountain district of Voiron, about nine miles from Geneva. There he established a Congregation of hermits, to whom he gave rules, and I have heard that their lives are most exemplary and edifying, most useful to all the neighbourhood as a model of spiritual excellence, and many come there secretly on pilgrimage from Geneva.

He intended to establish other Congregations in his bishopric, among which may be mentioned the Oratorians, whom he wished to place at Rumilly, but his death prevented the accomplishment of this purpose.

He established two colleges of Barnabite Fathers in this diocese, as has been already said, and finally he instituted our Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, the customs of which were imitated by other Nuns in the reform of many of their Convents, urged thereto by the sweetness and serenity which they had observed in our manner of life.

The considerations which moved him to this latter work were purely divine, and in conformity with the thoughts with which God had inspired him long years before. Indeed those who saw and knew of the birth and progress of the Order cannot attribute its origin to any human cause, and, thanks to God, it has flourished, and gained

so high a reputation for piety, that since it was established seventeen years ago, the number of its Convents and their inmates has so greatly increased in Savoy, France, and Lorraine, that there are now as many as twenty-eight Houses actually established, as well as several all ready to be so, both in Piedmont and in other parts of France.

In short, it is impossible to give you an idea of his ardent zeal for the souls of Religious. He said one day and with extraordinary feeling: "If a person living in the world were to ask me what she must do in order to save her soul, I should answer: *Keep the commandments of God, and you will infallibly do so.* But to a Nun I should say: *By giving yourself absolutely and entirely to God. The King of Kings will have all or nothing, He will reign alone or not at all. It will not be God Who will judge Monks and Nuns, but the Saints, who will say to them: We had the same flesh and bones as you have, and yet we walked along the road marked out for us by our Master.*" He used also to say that it was better to be cold than lukewarm, because coldness was at least recognisable, but that the lukewarm were intolerable to our Divine Lord; that He would cast them away from Him. All this is true, &c.

FORTY-FOURTH POINT

HIS ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF SOULS THE BOOKS HE PUBLISHED

Her answer on the forty-fourth point was:

It is an undoubted fact that our Blessed Founder had an ardent and universal zeal for the salvation of souls and for the profit of every living creature. All his life, indeed, was spent in work of this kind.

I know that by his gentleness, prudence, and timely aid he won for God souls plunged in the mire of horrible sins, which were supreme in certain families, and from which he entirely delivered them.

"Oh!" he once said to me in writing, "how sweet and honourable is the service of souls, however laborious!"

He led a very great number of souls in various parts of the country to live a perfect life, as I have said before, and for them he was obliged to write multitudinous letters, all with his own hand, besides reading those which were addressed to him, and they were often very long and badly written.

He wrote to me once: "A great number of souls flock to me, asking me how they must serve God. Help me by your prayers; as for ardour, that burns within my heart more hotly than ever. But you see, so many children throw themselves

into my arms and seek nourishment from me, that I should lose all my strength if the love of God did not reinvigorate me."

It was this same zeal which made him undertake the writing of those excellent books which he has bequeathed to posterity, and which he wrote under the pressure of so much business, that people who knew his innumerable occupations of other kinds were filled with admiring wonder.

The first book he wrote was the *Defence of the Holy Cross*, upon which he was engaged while labouring for the conversion of the heretics in the Chablais. Indeed this book was intended to confute and crush the arguments of the Genevan Ministers, who had written against the honour of this standard of our salvation.

The second was *Advice to Confessors*, being a help to the Priests of his diocese in the direction of souls in the Sacrament of Penance.

The third was the *Introduction to the Devout Life* for persons living in the world; a book which it is said the Spirit of God alone could have dictated, and which has been highly and universally praised both by the learned and unlearned; a book which has been, and still is, most profitable to multitudes of souls. Indeed there is scarcely a nation which has not desired to have a translation of the work, and the editions through which it has passed are truly numerous enough to fill one with astonishment. An infinite number of souls have found in this book the means of their

salvation and the way of true Christian perfection, according to their position.

Many people have told me that from this book they received their first seeds of devotion, and the light and teaching necessary to carry on and maintain it.

I know one person who, being immersed in the vanities of the world, having read this book for the first time, owned that she was at once so entirely converted that very soon afterwards she became a Nun. Not only that, but she led many people of rank, living in the same house with herself, to exchange a life of idleness and frivolity for one of devotion; and it is well known that the reading of this book induced many young girls to enter religion. The Reverend Jesuit Fathers recommend it incessantly, and give it as a guide to the Nuns of St. Ursula, who teach girls.

This book having fallen into the hands of a person who is said to have been the Head of a Religious Order, he considered it to be so full of the Spirit of God, that he declared no one but its author could bring his soul into a state of repose. He therefore resolved to seek him out wherever he might be, and set forth on his journey, although he is said to have lived at about three hundred miles distance from here. On reaching Lyons he heard that our Blessed Founder was there, having come to see the late Cardinal de Marquemont. The Monk sent a note to the holy Bishop by a lackey, begging him to fix a place and time in which he could speak to him at his ease,

adding that, if his lordship did not do so, he would be responsible for the loss of his soul. Upon this our Blessed Founder, in spite of the remonstrances of those about him, who feared some foul play on the part of the heretics, instantly appointed a time for seeing him in the parlour of our Convent at Lyons. The Monk, as soon as he entered the parlour, cut the bell rope so that no one might interrupt him, and then kept the holy Bishop for four hours listening to his general confession, after which he received his blessing, and went away full of consolation and peace of mind.

A gentleman from Limoges, coming to visit the tomb of our Blessed Founder, desired to speak with me, and told me that he had taken this journey on purpose to venerate the last resting-place of one to whom he owed so much. He went on to say that, having by chance come upon and read the *Introduction*, he found in it so much that was attractive and perfect as regards the Christian life, that he was instantly inspired with a longing to change his own way of life, and to implore the aid of the writer of the book. That then, having been told by his Confessor, a Jesuit, that our Blessed Founder was the writer, and further where the place was in which his holy body rested, he at once set forth upon this pilgrimage, although it was in the depth of a severe winter, and the journey about three hundred miles long. He went on to tell me at length all about his past life and the miracle of his

conversion by the reading of this same book, and how he had ever since taken our Blessed Founder for his advocate and intercessor. He drew from his fingers two diamond rings, asking me to offer them in honour of the holy Bishop, adding that if he had anything more precious he would gladly offer it, so great was his zeal and his confidence in his prayers. He told me that he was going to become a Jesuit, and I believe that he is one now, for I learned from his last letters to me that he had been a Priest for a year, and that having wound up his affairs he was going to enter amongst the Jesuit Fathers, in order to carry out his intention. He entreated me always to commend him to the prayers and intercession of his blessed protector.

Even the Huguenots hold this book in high esteem, so far as its teaching with regard to manners and morals is concerned.

A gentleman of Dauphiné, a heretic, having had it given to him by some friend, read it, and found it so profitable that he kept it, and wrote at the beginning with his own hand: "I have read and re-read this book; God grant that it may be to His glory and the salvation of my own soul!" This desire was granted, and he died a good Catholic, the book being found after his death, with the writing in it above mentioned.

The Reverend Father-General of the Carthusian Order, a man of great holiness and advanced learning, said openly, after reading this book, that the author had been so successful in his work,

that it alone was sufficient to immortalise his memory.

Besides this, our Blessed Founder wrote an admirable *Treatise on the Love of God* in twelve books, a work which makes me truly feel how pure that Divine love was in him, and how deeply versed he was in the science of the Saints. Often, when he was composing, he used to say that he should try to write as much on his own heart as on the sheets of paper before him. Humble souls, who receive from God special and abundant light, find there all that they could desire to guide them to a perfect union with God. Indeed it is a firm and unchanging truth, attested by all who knew the holy Prelate and his books, that his teaching may be followed without any fear of going astray, since it is perfectly Catholic, clear, straightforward, solid, and secure, leading on to the purity of the Faith and the perfection of Divine love.

I know as a fact that our Blessed Founder intended to write many other treatises on religious subjects; he used to say that he only desired a longer life that he might write something more to the honour and glory of this Divine love. The overwhelming press of business and his own physical infirmities, however, prevented his continuing what he had already begun, and death came suddenly and all too soon upon him, to the great grief and loss of the general public as well as of the many souls who still deplore it continually. This is true, &c.

FORTY-FIFTH POINT

HIS CONTEMPT FOR HONOURS AND FOR WORLDLY GOODS

Her answer on the forty-fifth point was:

It is a well-known and positive fact, that our Blessed Founder had a very great contempt for the things of this world, for its pomps, its vanities, its grandeur, and all that it esteems the most. He said once: "I always find a difficulty in composing the funeral orations of Princes and Princesses, because so much of the world, for which, thank God, I have no inclination, must enter into them."

The late King, Henry the Great (Henry IV), in the year 1602, when our Blessed Founder went to France to re-establish the Catholic religion in the bailiwick of Gex, entreated him earnestly on five different occasions to remain in the country, promising him a good revenue and large benefices. He, however, replied that since Divine Providence had bound him to the bishopric of Geneva, he desired to work there, and to make no change. I have been told on reliable authority, that this same King awarded him a handsome pension, having heard that his revenue only amounted to a thousand crowns, a sum which he said was too small for a Bishop. Our Blessed Founder thanked him, but refused to accept it. He used to say that it was better to want little than to have much; that he who

was not satisfied with a sufficiency would be satisfied with nothing. He detested those who, having enough to support themselves according to their condition in life, yet did all they possibly could to get more. As for himself he wished, he said, to have no other to-morrow than the Providence of God.

This same King again entreated him to come back to France for the service of the Church. He wished to be told what kind of service, not considering himself capable of all sorts of employment, and added: "God has given me the grace to know that I am made for Him, by Him, and in Him. I shall never be the child of fortune as long as I live; that is why I will never hesitate to go wherever I may be called for the service of the Divine glory; but still I am generous enough to wish only to be set to such work as I am able to do properly."

I have never known a soul so disinterested and so absolutely stripped of affection for the things of earth as was our Blessed Founder. He told me that, on his last return from Piedmont, two persons of rank applied to him, with an entreaty that he would help them to obtain from his Highness the Duke of Savoy some favour, involving great pecuniary advantages, which they desired, adding that they promised him a large share in their profits. He answered gently: "You do not know me; I am a man without such interests, and never do anything for money; but rest assured that I will exert myself for you

in the matter with even more zeal than if it were for myself." And this he did.

His friends often wished to procure other benefices for him, even the last time he came to Paris, but he would never stir in the matter. He said: "If I leave my bishopric, it will not be in order to take on myself the burden of another, for whether Divine Providence makes me change my abode or leaves me here, is all the same to me. Would it not be better for me to have no such burden of office, so that I might breathe a little in the Cross of my Saviour and write something for His glory?"

There lives not the creature, I believe, who ever knew him to take a step, or say a word to advance his own preferment in the riches and honours of this world. His sole ambition was, as he has often told me, to spend his life as usefully as was possible for the increase of the glory of God, and of the salvation of souls.

Some one writing to him on one occasion, wished him much prosperity and temporal advancement. He replied: "Ah! what are you wishing me? Greatness and prosperity, did you say? Indeed I do not want any. By the grace of God I only expect and desire in this miserable world, such a measure of both as the Son of God, by His own will, possessed in the Manger at Bethlehem."

Again, he wrote to me thus: "Do not think that any Court favours can entangle me. Ah! how much more desirable a thing it is to be

poor in the house of God, than to dwell in the splendid palaces of Kings! I am making my novitiate here (he was then in Paris with the Cardinal Prince of Savoy), but I will never be professed here, God helping me. Thanks to Him, I have learnt at the Court to be more simple and less worldly; but could we possibly love this miserable vanity of a world, after having considered the goodness and the unchangeableness of the Eternity of God? for we must neither love nor cling to anything but the truth of our good God, to Whom be praise for ever that He has led us to a perfect contempt for all earthly things."

Our Blessed Founder certainly never handled money except to distribute it to the poor, and he so despised it that he had no wish to know anything about its value, or the different kinds of coins circulated.

People were astonished, knowing that his revenue was only a thousand crowns, at his being able to discharge all the expenses which fell upon him, for notwithstanding his lavish almsgiving, all sorts of persons were hospitably entertained at his house.

His furniture was very simple though suitable; his dress neat and clean, but his servants have assured me that his underclothing was, generally speaking, much mended. In short, in all places and in all things he showed his supreme contempt for this world's affairs.

One day, returning from the town to his house,

he found the door closed, nor could it be opened for some time. At this he was secretly delighted, and stood humbly waiting outside like a poor beggar.

It was an extraordinary satisfaction to him to have no house of his own, and to know that the master could turn him out whenever he pleased. "A great many people," he said, "try to persuade me to buy a house. Oh! if they only knew the comfort it is to me not to have one, and that I never wish to have one, and that I hope to die glorying in having nothing, and that that is my one ambition. Yes, let the world clamour as it will, by the grace of God I shall never change in this." And God in a measure fulfilled the desire of His servant, for he died in the house of a poor gardener.

Some one wrote to him once saying that she was *absolutely poor, God be thanked.* "Oh!" he replied, "if that were true I should say that you were then *absolutely happy, thanks be to God.* Our Lord said: *Blessed are the poor!* Human wisdom never fails to say, Blessed are the Monasteries, Chapters, and Convents which are rich." And he added that we should cultivate poverty, and that we should be glad that it should be little esteemed.

"I search my heart closely," he said, "to discover whether old age is leading me into avaricious thoughts and feelings, but I find, on the contrary, that it has set me free from care, and made me reject with my whole soul all kinds of

covetousness, human forethought in looking to the future, and fear of falling into poverty and want."

The third day of the month of August, at seven o'clock in the morning:

In continuation of the same subject, I may say that our Blessed Founder gave away the whole of his own patrimony, despoiling himself of it freely in favour of his brothers. He wrote to me that it was a delight to him to do so, and that he felt as if he were relieved of a great burden, now that he had no more temporal possessions.

Some of his family told him, on one occasion, that people who made no show in this world always exposed themselves to ridicule, and that it was his duty to spend part of his time in doing something for himself and his family. He afterwards said to some persons who were in his confidence: "I laugh to scorn all these follies; for one of my greatest consolations is to picture myself as having nothing, and certainly when I die I shall have nothing."

From all this we see clearly that our Blessed Founder had an extraordinary love for the Evangelical Counsels, especially for holy poverty, which was most dear to him. He often wished to be deficient in something which bare necessity demands, so that he might in that at least imitate his Saviour, the King of the poor. Especially towards the close of his life, this love

increased greatly in his heart; he often spoke of it, and expressed his high esteem of it.

He had also been endowed by God with a most keen perception of the beauty and excellence of these holy Counsels, and it was for this reason he held in such supreme contempt the things of this life which are opposed to them. He used to say: "The more I see of the world, the more I dislike it, and I do not believe that I could live in it, if the service of souls and the furtherance of their salvation did not lighten the burden. The more I know of it, the more highly I esteem those who belong to Jesus Christ."

In short it would be impossible to express the contempt of our Blessed Founder for the things of this life; indeed he used to say that no one whose heart was in heaven could possibly fret about the things of earth. All this is true, &c.

FORTY-SIXTH POINT

HIS MANNER OF DEALING WITH HIS NEIGHBOUR

Her answer on the forty-sixth point was:

It is well known that our Blessed Founder gave most easy and free access to all who wished to hold intercourse with him. He had given orders to his servants never to send away any one who asked for him, except on occasions when he was obliged to shut himself up in order to despatch some important business. This, how-

ever, he very seldom did, although, as he once told me, the business of his diocese and that which came upon him from elsewhere poured in, not in streams but in torrents, so that we may well admire the way in which he managed to satisfy every one and fulfil all that was required of him.

He received everybody with the same gracious calmness, rejecting none, whatever their condition might be. He listened quietly to them all and as long as each person desired. So patient and attentive was he, that you would have thought he had nothing but that one thing to do; and all left him content and satisfied. Indeed people were only too glad to have some business to communicate to him, that they might enjoy the sweetness and serenity which he diffused into the souls of those who spoke to him, and whom he attracted by this means to confide in him. This was especially the case when the communication related to the soul, for it was his delight to speak of holy devotion, and to incite others, as far as he could, to practise it, according to their vocation and condition.

The manner and speech of our Blessed Founder were exceedingly grave and dignified, but at the same time, most humble, gentle, and candid, for he was absolutely devoid of art, dissimulation, and stiffness. He was never heard to use a badly-chosen word, such as could in the smallest degree annoy any one, or such as breathed of levity. He spoke in a low voice,

gravely, steadily, gently, and wisely, and always to the point, but without any attempt at fine language, or any affectation; he loved artlessness and simplicity. I myself, and also many others, have often noticed that he never said too much or too little, but just exactly what was necessary; using expressions so good that they left nothing to be desired. He used to teach us that many things should be said by modest silence, and calmness of mind and deportment, and certainly this practice was much to be admired in his own case.

He was very truthful in all that he said, and used to say that to abstain from lying was a great means of attracting the Spirit of God to dwell within us. When he was struck by the apoplexy of which he died, an Out-sister * of our Convent at Lyons, hearing of his seizure, hurried to him, and thinking to rouse him, told him that his brother, the Bishop of Chalcedon, had arrived. He replied firmly: "Ah, Sister, we must not lie."

The conversation of this great servant of God was openly extolled, and was generally considered, by those who knew him, unequalled in its agreeableness. A French prelate spoke of it as perfectly angelic. My brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, as well as my late father and several other persons of high rank who had been his familiar friends, and had travelled with him, could not sufficiently praise his holy, useful, and

* *Tourrière.*

most delightful conversation; I have heard them speak of it with admiration.

He never laughed at, or offended any one. He sometimes told little amusing stories, but with so much modesty, that those who heard them, were equally entertained and edified. If he chanced to be in company where the faults of neighbours were discussed and blamed, he always showed that he took no pleasure in the subject, and made excuses for the disparaged individuals. For, if he could not excuse the act, he excused as far as possible the intention, and cast the blame of the errors upon the infirmity of the persons. When the faults committed were very grave, he would raise his eyes to heaven, shrug his shoulders, and say softly: *Human misery! human misery! this is to remind us that we are but men.*

He was never, I believe, heard to speak ill of any one, nor to criticise the actions of others. If any one else did so in his presence, he took up the defence of the absent person, and showed by his words how much such conversation displeased him.

Above all things, he could not endure that any one should turn his neighbour into ridicule; he said that this was directly contrary to charity. It happened on one occasion that a person of high rank ridiculed before him another who was very ugly and awkward. When the rest of the company had departed, the holy Bishop took the offender aside. "What!" he exclaimed, "do you

treat your neighbour in this way? Is not this creature whom you consider so disagreeable made to the image of God? Perhaps she is a thousand times more pleasing to Him in her external ugliness, than all the beauties of the world have ever been. We must learn to love God in His creatures."

This holy Bishop was one of the most perfectly courteous and well-bred men in the world. I know that some of the courtiers admired this in him especially. His holy gravity and dignity were so blended with humility that he excited esteem, reverence, and love in the hearts of all who spoke with him. His words also were gentle, but went to the heart; in fact all those who spoke to him were greatly edified and perfectly satisfied. As he passed through the streets, every one who met him and received his blessing thought himself happy indeed. Even the little children pressed round him, and he touched and caressed them with wonderful tenderness. And all this is true, &c.

FORTY-SEVENTH POINT

HIS CONDUCT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS DIOCESE

Her answer on the forty-seventh point was:

It is well known that our Blessed Founder never failed to hold a Synod every year with the

greatest advantage to all his priests, whom he stirred up by his zealous sermons to great activity in well-doing.

I have often been told that he held Ordinations at the times prescribed by the canons of the Church, and I believe, when he was in his diocese, he never failed to be present at them.

I also know that he made his visitations most punctually throughout his diocese, and with endless fatigue, being often obliged to climb on foot amid lofty mountains and inaccessible rocks; often limping with pain, but never, as I have been assured by those who were with him, expressing the least weariness or making the faintest complaint. He always pitied the discomforts of his companions most heartily, but never said anything about his own. Often in the evening he was so weary in mind and body that he could scarcely move; but the next morning he was the first to set to work again.

He ruled his diocese in the most holy manner, and with great care and diligence. For my own part, I believe that there are few, if any, dioceses in which the Priests, Monks, and laity live in a more exemplary and devout manner than in that of Geneva. This is, indeed, especially the case in our town of Annecy, in which the most extraordinary piety manifests itself; in the frequent reception of the holy Sacraments, in the thronging of the Churches, and in the goodness of the people, who live there in the fear of God, bearing their afflictions meekly; and this, in consequence

of the good example and holy instructions of their beloved Prelate.

To be brief, he was indeed a true Father, a most watchful Pastor, and he discharged all the duties of his office perfectly, to the glory of God and the edification of all the people, who loved and reverenced him as a Saint, which in truth we believe him to be.

I know that he often went about into all parts of his diocese, wherever the necessities of the Churches, and especially of his own people, called him, as, for instance, a short time before his death, when he went to hear the confession of an old man at, I believe, the farthest extremity of his diocese; this old man being at the time in a dying state, and refusing to make his confession to any one but our Blessed Founder.

FORTY-EIGHTH POINT

THE EXCELLENT ORDER OF HIS EPISCOPAL HOUSEHOLD

Her answer on the forty-eighth point was:

The household of the holy Prelate was composed of respectable persons, modest in dress and well-bred in behaviour and speech; very courteous to every one, as their good master had charged them to be. For he wished them to receive every one courteously, and never to send any one away unless he himself was occupied with important

business, and then that they should try to dismiss them with such kind words that they could not be vexed, or fear to return another time.

He would never allow them to dismiss any who came to him in trouble, or any strangers, but desired that he should always be told at once of their coming.

He took care that his servants should serve God, that they should live at peace, that they should be charitable to the poor, and should set, as indeed they did, a good example to their neighbour. He did not wish them to play at dice or at cards. He took care to cultivate their minds in virtue and the fear of God. Not one of them ever wore a sword, or a plume, or flowing locks, or gaudy clothing in the town; they were dressed in brown, but very neatly. He had their wages paid most regularly, and if ever they failed to discharge their duties when to himself only, this good and kind master scarcely seemed to notice it. This is well known, &c.

FORTY-NINTH POINT

HIS CHARITY TO THE POOR

Her answer on the forty-ninth point was:

In the twenty-seventh and thirty-sixth points I have already mentioned that nothing could equal the charity of our Blessed Founder to the poor, especially to those in disgrace, to widows,

and to orphans. All these he helped most kindly and liberally according to his ability; and I have been told that he kept a list of these, which he got through their Confessors. It is well known that no one was left without help which he could give. This is true, &c.

FIFTIETH POINT

THE MIRACLES WHICH HE WORKED DURING HIS LIFETIME

Her answer on the fiftieth point was:

I have heard that this great and holy Servant of God worked several miracles during his lifetime, and this is public report; and that he cured a Priest who was out of his mind, as well as a peasant named Bouvart, a servant of M. le Baron de Monthouz, who had gone mad. The man told me himself that our Blessed Founder laid his hand upon his head and gently pulled the hair at the top of it, and that at the same time the whole of the crown of his head seemed to be lifted, and he was instantly cured. I have heard of another young man out of his mind who was brought to him and cured; and he also restored to health the little daughter of the notary Decroux of this town, the child being ill of a fever. And this is true, &c.

FIFTY-FIRST POINT

HIS REPUTATION FOR SANCTITY

Her answer on the fifty-first point was:

It is a well-known fact that our Blessed Founder was regarded as a Saint during his life, and many people speaking of him called him one. Doctors of Divinity, Monks, Parish Priests, and an infinity of persons gave him that title; others called him a divine, an apostolic, a blessed man. He was universally esteemed as a great Prelate, blameless in conduct and actions, a great man of God, having in him something more than human; one in whom the Spirit of God abode, and who indeed had not his equal. In short I could not here give you an idea of what every one said of him.

For my own part, from the time when I first had the honour of knowing him, which was in the year 1604, when he was preaching the Lenten course of sermons at Dijon, I admired him as an oracle. I called him SAINT from the bottom of my heart, and I considered him as such. One day he saw in a letter which I had written that I had called him SAINT; he sent me word that I must not do it again, that Holy Church had not given me the power of canonising Saints. I held him in such veneration that when I received his letters, I opened and read them on my knees, kissing them out of reverence and devotion, and taking what he said to me as proceeding from the Spirit of God.

My brother, the Archbishop of Bourges, and my father, the late President Frémyot, held him in such veneration, that notwithstanding their repugnance to my leaving their house, my children, and my country, when I proposed doing so in order to enter religion, telling them that I would do nothing except by their advice and that of that great Servant of God the Bishop of Geneva, they replied: "Do what he tells you, for he has the Spirit of God."

The late M. Favre, First President of Savoy, whom I have before mentioned, moved by the same high esteem for our Blessed Founder, left his eldest daughter entirely at his disposal, to be employed in the service of God, under his direction, in our Order, of which she was in fact the second to be admitted.

I know that M. le Baron de Cusy, a man of rare virtue and piety, who, although married, led the life of a Capuchin Friar, said, quite twenty-three years ago, that the Bishop of Geneva was never to be seen except with a countenance so sweet, serene, and radiant that it insensibly infused devotion into all hearts.

I know that when he preached at Dijon he was admired by the whole Parliament, and was so much revered that people envied those who belonged to his household and could always listen to the words of wisdom which issued from his mouth; they thought themselves most fortunate when they could just see him and speak to him. When he left Dijon after his Lenten preaching,

he came to bid a last farewell to the Archbishop of Bourges, who was just then at Dijon in his Abbey of St. Etienne, for these two good Prelates could hardly bear to part from one another. In the great courtyard of this same Abbey there was a vast concourse of people eager to see him once again, and to show their love and esteem for the holy Bishop. I have been told that many cried out that such a man must not be allowed to return on horseback, but that he ought to be carried home shoulder-high, and that the good people invited each other to do this. Others shouted (and this I heard myself) that he was a robber, for that he was carrying off with him the hearts of all the people of Dijon! which indeed he was doing, for he had found a place deep in the heart of every one. Others said that they ought to keep him amongst them, and all would have been only too glad to have contributed to his maintenance.

He travelled once through the province of Burgundy to Dôle, Besançon, and other places, and it is impossible to enumerate the honours which were everywhere paid to him, and the marks of esteem showered upon him in recognition of his eminent virtue and piety.

His reputation for sanctity was so extraordinary in Paris, that on his last visit there he was received by the people with indescribable joy and shouts of applause. A few days after his arrival there he preached in the Church of the Oratory, where there were many Cardinals, Princes, noble-

men, and such a crowd of distinguished persons as had never been seen before. It was a pleasure to them to see him, to speak to him, to touch him, to be able to be touched by him; he was obliged to pass through the crowd of people to go up into the pulpit, and those who were pressed against him said to one another with great delight: *He touched me!* During his sojourn in this great city there was a continual thronging of people to his lodging, and even to the place where he happened to be going to say Mass. They went to consult him, having recourse to him as to an oracle of piety and learning, that they might obtain solutions to most complicated affairs, or be advised in matters of conscience, or be instructed in the way of salvation. He was in request everywhere and with every one, to attend at public gatherings and take part in important consultations; to officiate pontifically in one Church, and to preach sermons and give all sorts of spiritual help in another. The Superiors of the neighbouring Convents, those most distinguished by their piety, and ruled by ladies of high rank, desired to see him and to have his advice for the guidance of their Communities.

On his return journey from France, our Blessed Founder, having been commanded by the Prince of Piedmont to accompany Madame Christine, the King's sister, in her journey from France to Savoy, passed through a great many large cities of the kingdom, and everywhere had extraordinary honours paid him. This was especially the case

at Bourges, where every one was eager to receive his blessing; whole families declaring that they esteemed themselves happy, and desired nothing more, since they had had the consolation of seeing him and of being blessed by him; and this I heard from a person most worthy of belief, who was then at Bourges.

The French Prelates all esteemed him most highly, and several of them were desirous to learn from him how to govern their dioceses well. After the death of our Blessed Founder, they showed what they thought of his sanctity, by appealing in a body to His Holiness, entreating him to proceed with the work of his beatification.

One of the great Prelates of France, and as it is believed, one of the best preachers of his time, the Bishop of Nantes, said that our Blessed Founder was like a bundle of aromatic woods of all kinds, sending forth on all occasions its sweet odour.

The Duke of Savoy said that he was the St. Charles of his dominions, and commended himself earnestly to his prayers, and since his death he has insisted on having the holy Bishop's portrait, which he keeps in his own room, and when he looks at it, salutes it reverently. The Princes and Princesses of Savoy esteemed and praised him highly, and in Piedmont he was so greatly revered, that after his death they invoked him, and sent many votive offerings to his tomb.

I have been assured that when he fell sick at Turin, in the house of the Feuillant Fathers, they

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said to those of whom they had borrowed linen for his use: "Keep it carefully, for a Saint has used it," and they did so. These same Fathers and their Father-General said that when the holy Bishop presided over their Chapter, as Commissioner Apostolic, they looked upon him as an angel from heaven, admiring his gentleness, his patience, and the perfection, in fact, of his whole demeanour and conduct.

The high reputation of this blessed Servant of God had spread so widely not only throughout France, Piedmont, and Savoy, but also into foreign countries, that they wrote from Flanders to our Confessor, saying that he was looked upon and spoken of as a St. John Chrysostom, a St. Jerome, and other holy Bishops.

About ten years before his death, and during a period of about two years, possessed persons, or those who were thought to be such, were often brought to him, and left him cured, or at least much consoled.

The same day, August 3, *at three o'clock in the afternoon:*

Continuing the subject of the preceding point, I may tell you that, having heard the rumour about these possessed people, I asked our Blessed Founder to tell me what was really the truth of the matter. He replied with great humility and modesty: "They are good people who are afflicted with melancholy. I hear their confessions, give

them Communion, and console them as well as I can. I tell them that they are cured; they believe me, and depart in peace." I have heard that hundreds of people in this part of the country, who were suffering in a similar way, were cured by his intervention. Most people, both of this neighbourhood and others, as soon as any affliction, either of body or mind, befell them, went to him.

Many helpless invalids, and those suffering from melancholia, went to him to be relieved. He prayed for them at Holy Mass, and they returned, the first cured, the others comforted. I have heard this affirmed by persons worthy of credence.

Recourse was had to him in the case of marriages impeded by some obstacle or by some charm, and he, partly by means of the Sacraments to which he brought them, partly by the prayers which they offered, delivered or relieved the afflicted ones.

Even the heretics esteemed him highly, those at Geneva regarding him as a man who feared God. They grieved over his death, saying that if they could only be sure never to have to deal with any but a Bishop like that, they would make no difficulty about receiving him, and that it was easy to see that he had no wish to live on earth; adding that he had been as much, if not more, regretted at Geneva than at Chambéry.

An heretical lawyer, after his death, sent an epitaph full of his praises. One of the Geneva Ministers, hearing of his decease, said he had only one fault, too great a love for the Roman Church.

Another heretic declared that he would have given his life to save him.

A man of high rank, but very worldly mind, took an extreme dislike to our Blessed Founder, and offered him all the insults in his power. He has since owned that for six years he was busy spying out all his actions to see if he could find anything in them to blame, but at last was forced to own that the holy Bishop was indeed saintly, blameless, and incomparably patient in bearing all that he had had to suffer from him. This man afterwards loaded him with benefits.

One of the Chaplains of our Blessed Founder, who was very much with him, says that notwithstanding his dislike to certain things done by him, as he considered with too much gentleness, he yet always firmly believed him to be a Saint. And although he was one of those who thwarted and opposed him the most, yet he bore a great respect and honour to him and to all that he said or did, being led to this by a secret instinct which told him that the holy Bishop was a true Saint, and that indeed, looking closely into the very actions which he had censured, he could not find a single atom of imperfection of which he could justly accuse him.

The same Chaplain says that when our Blessed Founder went to Milan to visit the body of St. Charles, numbers of Spaniards, who had known him when they were in garrison in this town of Annecy, thronged from all quarters to welcome him, congratulating one another on his coming

among them, and treating him with the reverence due to a great Saint.

People from Avignon and from Lyons, having heard of his renown, flocked to see him when he was on this last journey, and not only treated him with the greatest honour but also overwhelmed all who were attached to him with marks of affection. Happy, indeed, were those considered who could get close to him. As for me, so great was my esteem for him, an esteem with which God Himself inspired me, that I could have desired to be, if that were possible, the meanest member of his household, so as to have the happiness of seeing his actions and hearing his holy words, for they all breathed sanctity itself. Several have shared in this my desire. To conclude, this esteem remained always unvarying. And this is true, &c.

FIFTY-SECOND POINT

HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH

Her answer on the fifty-second point was:

This most humble and holy Servant of God, having said Mass on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist in our Church of the Visitation at Lyons, and having said it with extraordinary slowness, although it was late and his physical weakness was that day excessive, went on from the Church to the palace of the Duke de Nemours,

on a visit of charity, thence returning to his own house. After dinner, he began to write a letter on spiritual matters to a Lady Abbess, although he was already so oppressed by illness that his sight was dim and failing. Suddenly he fell, struck down by apoplexy and paralysis, of which, on the following day, the Feast of the Holy Innocents, he died a sweet and peaceful death, just as those about him were chanting the *Agnus Dei* of the Litany. He had received Extreme Unction with great devotion, and had done all that a Christian should do in this last journey.

His servants, who were overwhelmed with grief at seeing him in such extremity, implored him to say something to them. He replied: "Be at peace among yourselves, and live in the fear of God."

During his illness, he showed plainly how constant was his habit of practising virtue, and holding communion with God, for although from the nature of the disease he was drowsy and lethargic, yet whenever they roused him by saying some holy words from the Scriptures, he always went on with the words, and answered quite sensibly any questions concerning his soul, and anything else of that nature which was said to him. In these few but most excellent words spoken by him, he displayed the deepest humility and contrition.

He was asked if he would not like to have the most Blessed Sacrament exposed in our Church of the Visitation for him. He replied: "I do not deserve it."

He was perfectly resigned to the good pleasure of God, and indifferent as to the matter of his living or dying. He was entreated to ask Our Lord to restore him to health, as St. Martin did. "Ah no," he said, "I will not do it, for I know that I am absolutely useless."

He showed the most perfect and child-like confidence in the Divine mercy, and when asked if he was tempted by any doubts as to the Faith, he replied firmly: "That would be treason on my part." When told that many of the Saints had not been exempt from this weakness, he repeated nine or ten times but in Latin: "He Who has begun His work in me, will perfect it to the end." * The Reverend Father-Provincial of the Feuillants, who was beside him at the moment, told me this.

The Archbishop of Embrun told the Superior of our Convent at Grenoble that, on his death-bed, our Blessed Founder showed the most tender love for Our Lord and desire of the eternal joys of heaven. He told her that he was standing by the side of the dying Bishop, when suddenly he awoke for a moment to consciousness, and raising his eyes to heaven, cried: "Come to me, O my God! all my desire is for eternity and for my Saviour Jesus Christ!" This he said in Latin, and then relapsed into unconsciousness.

Throughout this illness he displayed extraordinary gentleness, obedience, and patience, never

* "He Who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ."—Phil. i. 6.

complaining, or saying a single word of ill-humour, submitting to all that was prescribed for him. He took medicine from a spoon, notwithstanding his extreme difficulty in swallowing. When asked if he was willing to be cauterised, he replied: "Let the doctor do what he pleases to the patient." They cauterised him twice, once on the nape of the neck and once on the head, and so deeply that the skull is said to have been injured, but he never uttered a word, except to murmur softly the first time: *Jesu, Maria.*

They blistered his head so that when the plaster of cantharides was removed the skin came with it. They rubbed his body so long and so violently that it was actually excoriated. In fact, in these last moments of his life he endured greater torments than could be imagined, and with the most admirable sweetness and patience; never doing or saying anything contrary to that perfect peace and tranquillity of mind and demeanour, which he preserved inviolate until the moment when he breathed his last sigh.

And all these things have been told me by persons of standing, by Monks and Priests most worthy of belief, who were present during this illness, as well as by his own servants.

I know that this most Blessed Servant of God had desired to die a martyr's death for the love of his God; and he once said that, if this grace should be vouchsafed to him, he would not wish to be one of those martyrs from whom all sense of their sufferings was taken away; that he would

rather feel his. This desire was granted, for in his death, and during the last year of his life, he was bowed down with the keenest physical anguish, as well as by the burden of continual labour for the good of his fellow-creatures.

And this is true, &c.

FIFTY-THIRD POINT

HIS FUNERAL, AND THE VENERATION SHOWN BY THE PEOPLE TO HIS MORTAL REMAINS

Her answer on the fifty-third point was:

I have heard from several people that when the death of this holy and blessed Servant of God became known, numbers of the inhabitants of Lyons hurried to the gardener's cottage attached to our Convent of the Visitation, in which cottage he had died. They threw themselves on their knees beside the holy body, kissing the feet and hands; an act of veneration of which the example was set by the President de Villars, a most holy man, and brother of their Lordships, Pierre and Jerome, Archbishops of Vienne. He was the first to kneel down at the feet of our Blessed Founder, and, having prayed for a while, to kiss them reverently. He afterwards asked M. Roland, Chaplain of the deceased Bishop, to give him his spectacles, which he did. Several other people asked the servants to give them something which he might have

touched, and received whatever was given them with great devotion.

His body having been opened in order that it might be embalmed, much fine linen steeped in his blood was taken to different places, carefully put away, and is still reverently preserved as relics of a Saint. His liver was shared between the Father-Provincial of the Feuillants and M. Menard, an ecclesiastic of great worth and reputation, who sent us a portion of it.

His heart was carried to our Convent of the Visitation at Lyons, where it is preserved with the greatest reverence in a silver, heart-shaped box. There it can be seen, both in colour and substance exactly as it was in life, and from it there flows continually a liquid which moistens the coverings in which it is folded; these are, therefore, frequently changed, and given to people who ask for them, and receive them with reverence. The Bishops of Langres and of Châlons-sur-Saône have come to look upon and to venerate it, deriving from this act great consolation. One of them wrote to me saying that this holy heart was one of the best relics France possessed; adding his admiration of its lifelike beauty.

Most of the greatest Religious Orders begged earnestly for some relic of our Blessed Founder, so that his brother and successor, the Bishop of Geneva, was obliged to distribute among them the robes, chasubles, albs, and other priestly garments which had belonged to him. The little triangular stones that were found in place of the

gall bladder, as has been said in the point on his gentleness, were also seized by those who were present.

His rosary was divided, and the beads distributed among various persons of rank. The medal attached to it was given to the Duke de Nemours, who, on the very day of our Blessed Founder's death, went to see him, and on his knees received his blessing for himself and for his son, the Prince of Geneva.

The holy body having been carried into the Church of our Convent at Lyons, the people crowded to it; they threw themselves on their knees before the shrine in which the body was exposed, said their prayers there, and touched it with their rosaries and other pious objects, allowing them to rest for a while upon the body: in fact they venerated it as the relic of a Saint.

When his servants wished to carry the holy body to Annecy, the people of Lyons strenuously opposed the idea; they had it placed in the Nun's Choir under their care, forbidding them to give it up to any one without special permission from these people themselves. The servants, therefore, finding their efforts useless, were obliged to have recourse to the Bishop of Geneva, his brother, that he might produce the will of our Blessed Founder, in which he had prescribed the place of his burial. The gentlemen of Lyons, thus being convinced of the real desire and intention of the holy Bishop, allowed the body to be taken from the Church and placed under the care of M. le Chevalier de

Sales, his brother, who was there on purpose to escort it back to Annecy. His servants were, however, obliged to be very speedy in this matter, for fear of hindrance from the people, who indeed afterwards repented bitterly of having allowed it to leave their city.

As the body of our Blessed Founder was carried along through the villages, the people came out to meet it, threw themselves on their knees, kissed the coffin, some even pressing the edge of the pall which covered it against their faces; doing, in fact, all that they could to show their recognition of his sanctity.

The Churches in which the body rested on its journey were instantly filled with people. Madame la Marquise de Meximieux, as soon as she knew that it had been deposited in the Parish Church of la Valbonne, hastened thither with several persons, and then with all her train escorted it a great distance until they reached the port, from which they never stirred until they could no longer see the precious shrine which enclosed these holy remains.

The Marquis d'Urfé, a knight of the Order of Savoy, ran a distance of two or three leagues to overtake the funeral procession. Having reached it, he threw himself on his knees, prayed silently, then rising, said aloud that he boldly paid his veneration to one who deserved it, and whom he considered to be a Saint.

On the way through Culoz, a village of this diocese of Geneva, a strange thing, worthy of

careful notice, occurred. The Baron de Cusy, M. de Pingon his nephew, and the Sieur de Fabri, were all then at Culoz. The latter, having seen the great honour paid by the people to the holy body, said in a derisive manner: "Really, they pay as much honour to this Bishop of Geneva as if he were a Saint!" He was instantly seized with faintness and giddiness, and for some time could not utter a word. When he had recovered from this sort of swoon, the first thing he said was: "I believe that God permitted this to happen to me because I had spoken jeeringly of the Bishop of Geneva."

The honour paid by the townspeople of Seyrsel to his body was beyond description. They arranged for it a *chapelle ardente*,* to which they crowded, kissing the coffin with fervour and devotion, and laying their rosaries and medals upon it; and when it left the town, they accompanied it in procession, carrying torches, and in the same order as that in which they had received it. They also deputed the highest dignitaries of their city to go the whole way, as torch-bearers, to Annecy.

When the holy body drew near to this bereaved town, all its inhabitants poured forth to do honour to the remains of their beloved Pastor, weeping bitterly, and overwhelmed with grief, although the presence of this sacred treasure, which was being committed to them, assuaged it somewhat. We, the Nuns of the Visitation, shed indeed many sorrowful tears, feeling as if no joy could ever

* Lying in state [*Tr.*].

again visit our hearts, now that we had lost so holy a Father and so kind a protector! Indeed, our only consolation was the remembrance that this was the Will of God, and the thought of the holiness of our Blessed Founder making us confident that he would continue his paternal care over us.

He was laid to rest temporarily in the Church of the Sepulchre, on the tomb of a holy monk named St. Andrew, until the Cathedral Church should be ready for him. People of all conditions, even the Lorraine soldiers who formed the garrison, pressed around the holy body. They vied with each other in their eagerness to kiss the coffin or touch anything which was near it; they seized the ropes of the litter, which they divided amongst them.

From thence it was taken to the Church of St. Francis, where the Cathedral Offices were then said, and with the greatest solemnity and beauty the Office for the Dead was chanted. Instinctively they had had the canopy and pall made of white silk, thus symbolising his purity and sanctity. In the evening it was brought into the Church of this Convent of the Visitation, where in his lifetime, the order had been given that it was to be buried, by our Blessed Founder himself.

As soon as this was done (I mean, as soon as the body had been placed in our Church), the people not only of the town, but also of the adjacent country, came flocking thither in numbers to show their devotion and veneration, calling him

Saint and Blessed. They brought their rosaries that they might touch the coffin with them, and linen cloths which they afterwards treasured or used for the sick; they kissed the coffin, its linen draperies, and the silken pall spread over it. It is impossible to give you an idea of the fervour of their veneration, and this not only continues at the present time, but increases daily, so that our Church, which was scarcely at all frequented, and in which only one Mass was said each morning, is now so thronged that it cannot hold the people, some of whom are obliged to remain outside until others come out, making it necessary for us to enlarge it, and the Masses are so frequent that we are compelled to arrange many altars at which they can be said. These altars are indeed often occupied from dawn to noontide, and sometimes even later. Votive offerings are being continually brought to his tomb, and massive silver lamps, and a foundation to furnish oil, has been provided by the Duchess de Nemours, to keep a light burning day and night before the tomb: though it has not yet been lit until it shall please His Holiness to beatify this faithful and most humble Servant of God.

Among the votive offerings made in our Church there are in particular a great many hearts of gold, silver, and wax. The Cardinal of Savoy, to show his devotion for our Blessed Founder, gave a very large and beautiful one of pure gold; the Infanta Maria a silver head; the Infanta Catherine, her sister, a rich altar-cloth and

chasuble of brocade. Also many torches and tapers of white wax, vestments and silver vessels for the use of the Church, linen, both altar-cloths and albs, pictures, and various other things, are being offered by her, quite as much in thanksgiving for favours received through the intercession of the holy Bishop, as in order to obtain new ones.

And great indeed is the concourse of Marquises, Ambassadors, Counts, Barons, noblemen, ladies of quality, Monks and Nuns, people, in fact, of all classes, both of this province and from a distance who arrive and depart hence, either having received the grace for which they have asked, or, as those who frequent the Church declare, at least full of contentment and consolation.

They come continually, bringing rosaries and other objects of piety to lay in the coffin in which his body was brought from Lyons,* and it is impossible to describe the tenderness and untiring devotion which the people display at his tomb. They kiss it; they lay their heads down upon it; if any have maimed or affected limbs they touch it with them. They scrape off powder from the tombstone, carry it away, and preserve it reverently.

They are constantly asking us for relics of our Blessed Founder. Great and small, Princes, Princesses, and people of all ranks and degrees, receive them with every demonstration of de-

* This coffin is still carefully preserved among the treasures of the first Convent of the Visitation at Annecy.

votion, as the relics of a Saint. We have had to send them to various parts of France, Piedmont, Lorraine, Burgundy, and other places where they were asked for.

His portrait was also demanded in so many places, that the painter could scarcely find time for any other work, and artists in various quarters were employed in copying the original. In the city of Grenoble, the capital of Dauphiné, most families consider it at once an honour and pleasure to possess a picture of the great Prelate.

In short, I see and hear on all sides that the honour universally paid to our Blessed Founder, equals that rendered to other Saints, he being called a Saint, and held, reputed, and proclaimed to be one by all; and this is true, well known, and public.

FIFTY-FOURTH POINT

THE GRACES OBTAINED BY HIS INTERCESSION

Her answer on the fifty-fourth point was:

Many of those who came to pay their devotions at the tomb of our Blessed Founder, have assured me that they received great and miraculous favours there, both as regards bodily and spiritual maladies. A young child of about seven years of age, who had never been able to stand, owing to the malformation of his legs and the weakness and twisted condition of his knees, was brought

by his mother, who assured us of this fact, to the tomb of our beloved Bishop.

Three days after she had begun to pay her devotions there, one of our lay sisters brought this child, hitherto so powerless, to the parlour, and I saw him walk about in the presence of two Jesuit Fathers and some of our sisters, the child himself showing the greatest delight at the benefit he had received. And it is well known to me and many others, that many afflicted persons, lame, deaf, dumb, blind, and even possessed, have come to this holy tomb for healing, and in many instances have obtained what they desired, leaving there numbers of crutches and walking-sticks which they no longer needed, and which therefore testified to their recovery. One holy Priest told me that it was impossible to enter this Church without a special feeling of devotion, and that even at night and in the morning, when it was shut, people would come and kneel outside the door to say their prayers, so it was found necessary to close it very late at night and open it very early in the morning.

I may add that about twenty-five Nuns of this Convent, I myself being among the number, have, since the death of our Blessed Founder, noticed in different parts of the house most sweet and strange odours, which could not proceed from any natural causes. Of this we are quite certain because, at the time that we perceived them, we made careful inquiries as to whether any perfumes or sweet-smelling things had been burned or mixed in

the house, but nothing had been, so that we could only attribute them to the visits of our Blessed Founder. Among the sisters also there is one who has entirely lost her sense of smell, but yet these delicious odours were perceived by her twelve or thirteen times on the same day, in different places, and I who am making this deposition, declare that one day, being sorrowful and distracted in my prayers, I became suddenly aware of a most sweet odour, followed by an extraordinary recollection of spirit. And this is well known in our Convent.

FIFTY-FIFTH POINT

THE LIVES OF THE SAINT WRITTEN BY VARIOUS AUTHORS

Her answer on the fifty-fifth point was:

I have seen and read the books of four authors who wrote his life, namely: the Reverend Père Jean de Saint-François, General of the Feuillants; the Reverend Père Louis de la Rivière, Minim; the Reverend Père Philibert de la Bonneville, Provincial of the Capuchin Fathers in Savoy; and the Sieur Longueville. Since these were published, a Monk of a reformed Order has made an abridgement of the Life of our Blessed Founder, drawn from the writings of the above-mentioned authors, which abridgement is to be found in *La Fleur de la Vie des Saints.* This is well known, &c.

CONTINUATION OF THE OFFICIAL REPORT

I, PHILIP DUCREST, duly delegated Apostolic Notary, in view of ensuring greater and fuller care, respect, and certainty of the truth, by order of the Judges and in their presence, have read over the above-written evidence in the presence of the Reverend Witness, who listened and understood, and who, after the reading was completed, once more declared and affirmed, that all those things were and are true, well known, and public, that concerning it all public opinion has been formed, and that it is a matter of public talk, well known and widespread, which is in the mouths of all.

And in attestation of the truth thereof, the undersigned Witness has affixed her signature at the end of the official Report, in presence of the aforesaid Judges, who have also signed it with their own hands; and I also, Philip Ducrest, Notary Apostolic, have signed it, in witness

whereof I have affixed thereto my common seal.

And I, Sister Jane Frances Frémyot, have given evidence as above, in witness to the truth whereof I have signed here below.

Sister Jane Frances Frémyot.

We, Andrew Frémyot, Archbishop of Bourges, Judge.

We, John Peter Camus, Bishop of Belley, Judge.

We, George Ramus, Protonotary Apostolic, Judge.

and I, Philip Ducrest, the aforesaid Notary Apostolic.

I, the undersigned, certify having made a faithful extract, word for word, by my own hand, of the present depositions, which occupy 162 pages and three lines, from the original contained in the sixth folio volume of the Official Proceedings undertaken by Apostolic authority at Annecy, in the Diocese of Geneva, in the year 1658, for the beatification and canonisation of St. Francis of Sales, wherein it has been carefully examined from page 230 to page 346, and nine lines of the following page.

In witness whereof, after having collated the said extract, and found it in all things conform throughout with the said original, I have initialled the bottom of every page, and signed my name.

Given at the afore-mentioned Annecy, Oct. 1, 1721.

In witness my hand,

François Duparc,
Protonotary Apostolic.

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